COMMUNALISM—A STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Communalism– A Struggle for Power

Prabha Dixit

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To

DR. KRISHNA SHARMA

and

DR. GOPAL KRISHNA

PREFACE

This book does not regard communalism as a political aspect of religious antagonism or a distorted version of class conflict. On the contrary it tries to show that it was a consciously conceived political doctrine propagated by one section of the traditional elites to counter-act the forces of nationalism and democracy. Since consciousness of cultural identity serves as the sheet-anchor for communal movements, introduction of democratic institutions in etchnically plural societier creates ideal conditions for sectarian politics. Politicization of religion or culture in such societies provides, particularly to the minority communities, an easy means of becoming effective pressure groups and places them in a better bargaining position in relation to the majorities. These communities, therefore, zealously guard their group identities and employ every possible method to attain group solidarity. The motive force and methods of majority communalism are basically the same as that of minority communalism. Nevertheless, there is one qualitative difference between the two: while the minority communalism endeavours to achieve political parity with the majority, the communalism of the majority strives to establish superiority over the minority. Both in terms of aims and leadership all communal movements based on religion or culture are movements of political and social reaction, not of revolution and reconstruction. This book views communal movements of the Muslims and Hindus from this stand-point.

One of the major contentions of the present study is that Muslim communalism in India did not arise as a reaction to Hindu communalism, nor was it religiously inspired. It was an independent political movement which developed as an antithesis of Indian nationalism. Its idealogues and adherents belonged to those social strata whose status and privileges could be conserved only by keeping the power structure of the traditional Indian society undisturbed, which sustained social inequality as well as cultural heterogeneity. The anti-Congress

tirades of Muslim leaders like Sir Ahmad Khan and Syed Ameer Ali were not the angry protests of the spokesmen of an impoverished and oppressed community, but the aggressive assertions of the representatives of the upper classes. These opponents of the Congress became the natural allies of British imperialism and their unholy alliance proved effective enough to retard the progress of the nationalist movement and prevent it from acquiring a revolutionary character. The liberation of India became a matter of negotiations and compromises amongst the Indians themselves. The Congress was pressurized by the largest pressure group, the Muslims, to such an extent that in 1946 it did not hesitate in negotiating away the territorial integrity of the country. Thus, the political choice for the division of the country was deliberate : it was not inevitable. It is an irony of history that even in modern times the will and decision of the select few determined the destiny of the masses of this sub-continent to whom both independence and partition were presented as the sure antidote for their material and spiritual ills.

This book also takes cognizance of the qualitative difference between the politics of the All India Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha and does not treat the former, manned and managed largely by the Hindus as it was, as the semi-communal organization of the Hindus as has been done in several works on Indian communalism. Instead an attempt has been made to show that the Hindu communal movement had an existence independent of the Congress and was inspired by the same political and material considerations which had played a decisive role in the emergence of Muslim separatism in Indian politics. In spite of its all India pretensions the Hindu Mahasabha could not out-rival either the Congress or the Muslim League. In reality its area of operation and influence remained confined to the north Indian provinces of the Punjab, U.P. and Bihar, and even in these it commanded little following. The only concrete achievement of the Hindu Mahasabha was that its belicose claims and aggressive propaganda methods helped the Muslim League to consolidate its hold over the Muslim masses.

No doubt the religious factor has played a significant role

in Indian politics, but one can not accord to it the status of being a causative factor in the development of the communal movements. Religion was primarily a weapon used by the communal leaders to fight their opponents; it never formed the ultimate end of their politics. My rigid uni-dimensional approach to Indian communalism is bound to invite criticism from all those readers who are firmly convinced that the true nature of this phenomenon can be understood only by viewing it in its multi-dimensional complexity. To them I would say that simplification of the complexities does not always imply an error of judgement or understanding.

Although the book is a historically oriented investigation into the nature of communal conflict, it does not pretend to be exhaustive. It is merely a frame-work for the study of communal problem from a new angle. In order to present the central theme in bold relief some of the well-known facts and events have been deliberately omitted. If the book succeeds in arousing new and more serious thought on Indian communalism, beyond the existing cliches and naive explanations, I would consider my labours amply rewarded.

Miranda House
Delhi

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INTRODUCTION

THE present study marks a departure from the general thesis that the Indian communal problem is the result of the religious and cultural differences which exist between the two communities, namely, Hindus and Muslims. Communalism is taken here as a political doctrine which makes use of religio-cultural differences to achieve political ends. It is *only when a deliberate choice is made by a community to initiate political demands on the basis of religio-cultural differences that communal awareness turns into communalism in the form of a political doctrine.* The demand for political autonomy is then justified to maintain cultural autonomy. In an ethnically plural society social tension and conflict are in fact symptomatic of the power struggle between various groups. Theoretical justification for such conflicts on religious grounds constitutes the core of communalism as a political doctrine.

Communalism as a political phenomenon is integrally connected with the emergence of nationalism in the 19th century. The 19th century witnessed the transformation of the sentiment of nationalism into a political ideology.[1] Principles of self government and new creed introduced a radical change in the strategies of power politics. In economically developed countries and homogeneous societies where a well-defined class pattern had already emerged, the warring politico-economic interests organized themselves into political parties with distinct and different political ideologies which could best serve their class interests. But this could not happen in the economically backward countries and multi-religious and multi-cultural societies. Here very often various political parties and factions got organized on the basis of religio-cultural and ethnological differences. The rising wave of nationalism did not always strengthen the forces of integration in such situations. On the con-

1. Hays, Carton J.H.: *Essays on Nationalism*, New York, 1966, chap. I.; Joseph, Bernard: *Nationality: Its Nature and Problems*, New Haven, 1929, chap. XX; Shafer Boyd: *Nationalism: Myth and Reality*, New York, 1955, pp. 155, 157 to 167; Friedmann, W.: *The Crisis of National State*, London, 1943, pp. 36, 37.

trary, it often led to serious dissensions amongst different groups, some of them evolving communal ideologies and claiming separate nationhood within the same country through their constant insistence on the separateness of their religio-cultural identities. Whereas nationalism became a weapon in the hands of the majority groups to capture power, communalism became a shield for the minorities to defend and safeguard their interests.[2]

Cultural differences between people belonging to different religions or regions within a country do not constitute a threat in themselves to the political unity of a nation. People of the same 'cultural–personal' nationality can live in a dozen different states without losing their sense of personal nationality. The 'cultural nationality' and the 'political nationality' of an individual are not twins but are two independent and separate entities.[3] The feelings aroused by the two are neither mutually antagonistic nor identical in nature. They are different. It is when the differences of cultural identities become the main basis for political demands that the awareness of 'cultural–personal nationality' assumes the dimension of a political doctrine. In this sense, communalism is not a natural outcome of religious and social–cultural differences; it arises out of the deliberate choice made by a people to use these differences to achieve some political end. In the past, the super-national or non-national empires could flourish in the world for centuries because the impulse to seek synthesis between political and cultural nationality was rare. As the idea of nationalism found wide acceptance in the world during the 19th century, the need to synthesize personal and political nationality became more and more imperative.

A people become identifiable as a nation when an aggregate of individuals are tied together by the same emotional bonds, share the same aspirations and cherish the same dreams. Besides other factors, the common cultural heritage of people also plays a sufficiently important role in bringing this about,

2. Black, C.E. (ed.): *Challenge in Eastern Europe*, New Jersey, 1954, pp. 7, 11, 14, 16, 23, 25; Clude, Iris L. Jr.: *National Minorities—An International Problem*, Massachussettes, 1955, p. 3.
3. See Macartney, C.A.: *National States and National Minorities*, London, 1934, chap. I.; Joseph, op. cit., chap. XXI.

but cultural integration of an entire people of a multi-religious and multi-cultural society cannot be identified with the culture of one community. At the same time, the acceptance of cultural pluralism within such a nation opens up immense possibilities for the different units to build up political fronts to safeguard their group interests. Strong awareness of a separate cultural identity can be manipulated to serve a political purpose. Political rights and privileges are then demanded on the basis of cultural identities, thus merging politics with culture. The outcome of this kind of fusion of culture with politics has been, as seen in the history of East European countries and India, the birth of separate nations amongst people who had otherwise shared a common history and heritage. In India, the political climate for the partition of the country into two sovereign states was consciously created through an exaggerated emphasis on the cultural differences between the two major communities.

But the communal problem leading to the partition of India is invariably explained in terms of religio-cultural conflict. This approach seems to originate in the *a-priori* assumption that religious differences *per se* have been the cause of the social tension and political conflict between Hindus and Muslims. When religion is taken as the sole cohesive and determinant force of social groups, the two communities are regarded as monoliths. This monistic explanation has not only restricted our vision of the present but has also produced a distorted picture of the medieval past. The social solidarity of each is taken for granted and it is assumed that all segments within the two communities are imbued with equally keen awareness of religious identity and differences. The communal problem in India is thus traced back to the medieval past—the historical point at which the two religions, Hinduism and Islam, came into confrontation with each other. The political conflicts of that period are viewed as communal conflicts and the contemporary communal problem is easily interpreted as an extension of the long-standing hostility between the followers of the two religions.

No doubt religion acts as a cohesive force in shaping distinct and recognizable communities. But only to a certain extent. The semblance of unity imparted by religion is always

tenuous in the absence of social and economic bonds. It cannot make a community immune from acquiring a fragmentary character. Nor can it prevent the sabre-rattling amongst its own members. Even a cursory glance at medieval Indian history would suffice to convince us that the ideal of social solidarity inherent in a religion was easily overshadowed by other forces.

The two major communities of India, the Hindu and the Muslim, instead of being two monoliths, were divided into several distinct groups on the basis of caste, occupation and race. The fragmentation of Hindu society was not limited only to the four caste divisions as enshrined in the works of the Hindu law-givers. In reality, a complex hierarchy had evolved within each caste, carrying the multiplicity of Hindu social groups to an absurd limit. The law of endogamy followed by each group erected strong barriers around them and made their separateness unbridgeable. The minute social stratification based on the principles of isolation and discrimination ruled out the development of any sense of solidarity amongst the Hindus as one community. Loyalty to one's own social group superseded loyalty to the larger community. The multiplicity of social groupings amongst the Muslims could never assume the same dimension. Nevertheless, it was significant enough to suppress the potentialities of social solidarity ingrained in their religion. Muslims of foreign-stock and the low-caste Indian converts formed two distinct social categories amongst the Muslims, the Ashraf and the Ajlaf. The latter were further subdivided into small autonomous groups on the pattern of the Hindu caste system. Their social life was regulated by their own individual set of socio-cultural norms which ran contrary to the declared norms of Islam. The hierarchical stratification of the medieval Muslim community on the basis of wealth, race and occupation drew a straight wedge between the members of the upper and the lower classes, and minimized the possibilities for the growth of communal solidarity that could weld all segments into a monolithic whole.

If the social structure of a community is fragmentary in character, the sense of identification and separateness experienced by its members without-group cannot have a uniform

pattern. Friction would easily occur at the level where distance is vast and consciously maintained. It would take place only at the point where intense religious consciousness of differences and identity exists and where these differences seem irreconcilable. It would seldom occur at levels where differences created by separate religious identities are nominal and are out-weighed by other considerations. This also implies that those who possess intense consciousness of their religio-cultural identity would not seek or extend political co-operation to people belonging to the opposite religious denomination against their own co-religionists.

An analysis of the social structure of both Hindus and Muslims would show that power, wealth, and social status were concentrated, more or less on a permanent basis, in certain social groups. Those who formed the upper strata in both the communities differed widely from the masses in their cultural orientation and mode of life. Several social and legal barriers that they had raised around themselves made them an exclusive group within each community. It was at this level, i.e. the level of the elite, that the awareness of the distinction between the two communities was most acute. The cultural and religious differences between the Hindus and the Muslims remained insignificant at the mass level. For example, the Hindu converts to Islam did not give up their faith in the village gods and goddesses in the rural areas; nor did they abandon their socio-religious practices. Similarly, the Hindu masses did not hesitate to visit the shrines of the popular Muslim saints. The culture of the elite of the two communities, therefore, was not only distinct from each other, but also different from that of the masses. The marginal cultural exchange that took place between the two communities at the elite level was purely utilitarian in nature. The culture of the Muslim elite was partially accepted only by those of the Hindu elite who participated in the administration of the empire or were engaged in building up their own royal status. On the whole, the elite of both the communities worked for the preservation and development of the "High Culture" of their respective groups. Their cultural insularity is well illustrated in the manner they distributed their patronage. If Persian and Arabic flourished

under the protective wings of the Muslim rulers and nobles, Sanskrit was encouraged by the Hindu rajas and zamindars. Cultural communalism practised by the elite blocked the way for the emergence of a common culture at all-India level. The homogeneity of the "vernacular culture" of the masses, for obvious reasons, did not influence the elite culture; nor could it spread beyond local or regional limits. In the absence of a common culture at the national or communal level, the degree and nature of separate cultural consciousness of medieval people also varied from section to section. As pointed out earlier, it was most noticeable amongst the elite of the two communities. But the cultural differences, of which they were so conscious, did not stand in the way of their political co-operation with each other for mutual benefit.

Looking at medieval society from the angle of socio-political relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims, we find that the area of conflict was confined to the small circle of the ruling classes. There were occasions when the lower sections were drawn in the elite conflict, but such occasions were rare and did not impair the relationship of the two communities at the mass level. Religio-cultural factors did not determine the attitude and role of the elite in the political matters. Nor did their religious feelings restrain them from fighting against their co-religionists in co-operation with their religious opponents. Cross-community political alliances between the elite formed the most important feature of pre-British Indian history. The politics of the elite was motivated and governed by self-interest and ambition. Even an orthodox ruler like Aurangzeb had utilized the services of the Rajputs against the Deccan Sultans and the Pathan tribes of the North-West Frontier. Although religion did not inspire political conflicts and cause social tensions, it was often used by the ruling classes, particularly the Muslim, to buttress their position or to mobilize communal support in the hour of crisis. This is understandable. A class which lived in social and cultural isolation from the rest of the masses, could not arouse support on any other ground except religion.

As long as the power-structure of the medieval society remained asymmetrical and the Muslim ruling class retained

its premier position, political conflicts did not give rise to social tension or cultural fanaticism. Consequently, the need for mobilization of communal support was absent. Military might was sufficient to resolve political conflicts. But once the Muslim ruling class was relegated to a subordinate position beyond the hope of recovery, as it happened in the 18th century, signs of socio-cultural tension became visible. At this critical juncture, when the Muslim ruling class found itself inadequate to combat the dangerous challenge posed by the newly born Hindu power groups like the Jats and the Marathas, it tried to arouse the religious emotions of the Muslim masses by identifying its loss of power with the decline of Islam. Similarly, the new Hindu aspirants to political power started using Hindu slogans to win mass support for their struggle against Mughal imperialism, identifying their political objectives with the cause of vindicating the honour and *dharma* of the Hindus. Such attempts made by the Hindu and Muslim elite were partially successful, for one section of the urban masses was gradually drawn into this elite conflict, and for the first time instances of communal violence occurred, which became more common in the succeeding centuries. The issue at stake between the Muslim ruling class and the Marathas was neither Hinduism nor Islam, but the empire of India. This power struggle was deliberately given a religious twist by those whose displacement had become imminent as well as those who were aspiring to dislodge them. But the moment the Marathas became dominant on the Indian political scene and the old pattern of power was re-established in a reverse order, social and cultural tensions which one noticed earlier were submerged. Shah Waliullah's intense religious propaganda amongst the members of the Muslim ruling class proved of no avail. They did not make any serious attempt at communal solidarity and made an easy peace with the Marathas to save themselves from further loss of power. With the expansion of Maratha power, the Maratha leaders also dropped their religious slogans. They did not find it awkward to take up the cause of the decrepit Mughal emperor against the ambitious Muslim chiefs and nobles.

The political conflicts between the Muslim and Hindu

power elite in the medieval period, therefore, were not guided by considerations of separate religious and cultural identities. They do not bear any resemblance with the communal politics which developed in the 20th century when the two communities were politically organized by certain sections of their elite on a religio-cultural basis leading to the formation of communal political parties. This development was not the result of religious antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims, but was directly connected with the rise of nationalism in India and the Indian aspiration to move towards democratic ideology and institutions.

The new commitment to nationalism and democarcy came as a great challenge to the Indians. Could a people divided by differences of religion and culture unite as a nation? Could democracy be worked out to the satisfaction of the Muslim minority if the Hindus and Muslims were to form one nation? The Hindus, having no extra-territorial links—religious, historical, or cultural—could easily find a common frontier with the new Indian nationalism. The choice before the Muslims was far more difficult. Were the Muslims not a nation in themselves? They asked. Were they not bound together by their own links of race, religion, culture, and history, which made them different from the Hindus? Whereas secular values and considerations drew many Muslims into the national movement, majority of them moved in the opposite direction to launch a separate political movement. The latter could be sustained by emphasizing the separate religio-cultural identity of the Muslims. The democratic ideal, an accompaniment of nationalism, presented another problem for the Muslims who were a minority but had ruled over the Hindu majority for centuries. A minority could not hope for political pre-eminence under a democratic set-up. But the Muslim minority could ensure a definite share of political power for itself by avoiding integration with the Hindus in the new atmosphere of emerging Indian nationalism. By following a policy of isolationism, it could demand political rights and recognition as a separate entity within India on grounds of the democratic principle of self-determination. The Muslim leaders, therefore, saw greater political benefit in propagating a com-

munal ideology—an ideology which could be evolved and fortified by arousing a keen awareness of the religio-cultural differences between Hindus and Muslims. Consciousness of these differences soon turned into hostility.

It is not surprising that Muslim communalism should have made its appearance first. Neither nationalism nor democracy posed any threat to the Hindus. The Hindu majority could more easily identify itself with the idea of an "Indian nation" and was more than sure of its position within a democratic framework. Exposed to the same currents, the Muslim minority was at once faced with an identity-crisis and the prospect of Hindu domination. Could it be a part of the Indian nation in the same sense as the Hindus? Would not that involve their undermining those aspects of their history and culture which they could not share with the Hindus? Being a minority, will they not be reduced to an insignificant position within a democracy? A communal ideology could resolve all this. The Muslims, therefore, sought political recognition as a religious minority first, and later demanded a separate Islamic state to fulfil their political ambitions. Hindu communalism, on the other hand, grew as a reaction to Muslim communalism. The growing demands of the Muslims and the political concessions made to them by the British Government and the Indian National Congress caused anxiety amongst some sections of the Hindus who feared that this might curtail the advantages the Hindu majority could otherwise enjoy. If the Muslims were not willing to underplay their religio-cultural identity in the name of Indian nationalism, why should the Hindus? Couldn't they evolve their own philosophy of Hindu nationalism to ensure a pre-eminent position for the Hindu majority? Couldn't they lay similar stress on their own religion and culture, and their place in Indian history, to doubly ensure a premier position for the Hindu majority? In due course of time, the Hindu communalists evolved their own philosophy of Hindu nationalism to achieve this.

Communalism had thus emerged as a political phenomenon in India under the growing pressure of nationalism and democracy. It was not the result of religious hostility between

the Muslims and the Hindus, but was evolved as a political doctrine and was closely tied up with the struggle for power. It is interesting to note, however, that both Muslim and Hindu communal movements were led by the upper sections of the two communities. By adopting a separatist stand and emphasizing the traditional aspects of their respective religions and cultures, both Muslim and Hindu elite tried to retain their pre-eminence within their own communities. Through a communal ideology, they could safeguard their position and combat the rising influence of a new class of progressive Indian elite who, cutting across the division of religious identities, had made a firm commitment to the modern trends of nationalism and democracy.

Communal politics in India represents a triangular power conflict of the elite. On the two points of the triangle stand the traditional Muslim and Hindu elite, and on the third, the new class of progressive Indian elite who championed the cause of secular nationalism and democratic values. We, therefore, do not ask the question: What were the areas of religious conflict between Hinduism and Islam? The questions we pose are: What were the principal social groups in the Hindu and Muslim communities before the establishment of British rule in India? At what level of their social structure were their cultural differences fundamental and wide? To what extent did these differences affect their political relationships? Which section of the two communities pioneered the Muslim and Hindu communal movements? By identifying the social segment from which the leadership was drawn and by ascertaining the position it enjoyed in the traditional power structure, we would be able to uncover the political motives which really inspired and sustained communalism in India.

CHAPTER ONE

MEDIEVAL MUSLIM SOCIETY: ELITE AND THE MASSES—THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HINDUS

ISLAM as a religion does not recognize birth as a criterion for social stratification. The democratic ideals of Islam, besides laying the foundation of cohesiveness and solidarity within the community, create the necessary atmosphere for social mobility also. In principle, therefore, the Muslim community is an open society in which the portals of political power and social eminence remain open to all its bonafide members. But the Islamic structure which the Turks brought with them to India was for all intents and purposes a closed system. Those who aspired for social recognition and political power had also to pass the qualifying test of race and birth;[1] and it proved too tough for quite a sizeable number. Generally speaking only those Muslims who could boast of a superior racial origin or some noble lineage were regarded as the most eligible for the leadership of the community.

"The strong family system and race consciousness buttressed by the doctrine of *Kifaa* secured the higher tiers of Muslim society from plebian infiltration...The elite accepted the endogamous pattern of community formation,"[2] and only those Muslims who had risen to power and were able to amass great wealth could enter the class of the ruling elite. Inclusion of Indian Muslims in the top hierarchy was thus kept to a bare

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1. Mujeeb, M.: *The Indian Muslim*, London, 1967, p. 366; Yasin Mohammad: *A Social History of Islamic India*, Lucknow, 1958, pp. 190-191.
2. *Kifaa* or the doctrine of Equality in marriage. In Hanafi Law the following are considered for equality: (1) family, (2) Islam, (3) profession, (4) freedom, (5) good character and (6) means. In order that a marriage may bear the character of a suitable union in Law, the husband must be equal of the woman in social status. The Hanafi law holds that equality between the partners is a necessary condition in marriage, otherwise marriage is not valid. See Fyzee, A.A.: *Outlines of Mohammedan Law*, London, 1964, pp. 104-5.

minimum. The whole system of the political hegemony of the Sultanate of Delhi depended on the continued inflow of Muslims from the North-West frontiers and beyond. Ibn Batuta who visited India during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq writes: "The King of Delhi, Sultan Muhammad Shah, makes a practice of honouring strangers and distinguishing them by governorships or high dignities of State. The majority of his courtiers, palace officials, ministers of state, judges, and relatives by marriage are foreigners, and he has issued a decree that foreigners (foreign Muslims) are to be bestowed in his country the title of *'Aziz'* (Honourable), so that this has become the proper name for them."[3]

"While the Delhi aristocracy, and its early representatives in the South, were mostly of Central Asian, Turki or Afghan origin, the newcomers in the South came mostly from the coasts of the Persian Gulf or from further north as far as the strip of territory on the south of the Capsian Sea, being mostly Syeds from Najaf, Karbala and Madinah and Persians from Sistan, Khurasan or Gilan."[4] Thus in its social composition the ruling elite of the southern Muslim kingdoms was not different from that of the North. Foreign Muslims who came from northern India were called the 'Deccanis' and the newcomers from Iraq and Iran were called *afaqis*.[5] Till the final years of the Bahamani Sultanate the Indian Muslims had no place in the aristocratic society of the Deccan.

This pattern of political power amongst Muslims continued, only with slight changes, under the Mughals.[6] Over

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3. Ibn Batuta: *Travels in Asia and Africa,* London, 1929, p. 184; Qureshi, I.H.: *Muslim Community of Indo-Pak Sub-continent,* New York, 1962, p. 82.
4. Sherwani, H.K.: *Mahmud of Gawan,* Allahabad. 1942, pp. 62, 63.
5. Ibid., p. 63.
6. See Nigam, S.B.P.: *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi,* 1967. Appendixes B and C; Habib, M: *The Political Theory of Delhi Sultanate,* Allahabad, Date ? p. 150; Moreland: *India at the Death of Akbar,* London, 1920, pp. 69, 70; Ali Mohammad Khan: *Mirat-i-Ahmadi* (Eng. Trans.), Baroda, 1965, Appendix I, pp. 929, 930 to 933; also see Bernier, F.: *Travels in the Mogul Empire,* Delhi, Reprinted 1968, p. 209; Minhajus Siraj: *Tabakat-i-Nasiri* (Eng. Trans.), 2 vols. Delhi, 1970, Section XII; Qureshi. op. cit.,

Pattern of Power Distribution under the Mughals
(during the reign of Akbar)

Rank	*No. of Foreign Muslims*	*No. of Hindus*	*No. of Indian Muslims*	*Origin not known*	*Total*
5,000	31	2	nil	nil	33
4,500	2	nil	nil	nil	2
4,000	7	2	nil	nil	9
3,500	2	nil	nil	nil	2
3,000	18	nil	nil	nil	18
2,500	5	1	1	nil	7
2,000	20	4	4	nil	28
1,500	3	2	1	nil	6
1,200	nil	1	nil	nil	1
1,000	29	3	nil	nil	32
900	32	3	3	nil	38
800	1	nil	1	nil	2
700	18	3	2	nil	23
600	4	nil	nil	nil	4
500	31	9	4	1	45
400	10	4	2	1	17
350	16	nil	1	1	18
250	8	1	1	1	11
200	62	12	3	3	80

seventy per cent of Akbar's *mansabdars* were Muslims of foreign origin.[7] The remaining, about thirty per cent, were of Indian origin and could secure, by and large, only the lower grades of the Imperial Service. This can be seen from the table given above.

p. 82; Abul Fazal: *Ain-i-Akbari,* Reprinted, Delhi, 1965. Ain 33, pp. 320 to 606. The details given in the Ain do not cover the last ten years of Akbar's reign.

7. Except one Hindu finance minister and one Hindu Bakshi, all seven Vakils (Prime Ministers), ten Vazirs (Ministers of Finance) and fourteen Bakshis of Akbar were foreign Muslims.

It should be noted here that except for a few artists who were low-caste Hindus and some Khatris in the revenue department, all Hindu *mansabdars* were Rajputs and belonged to the Hindu elite. Moreover, the sons of higher *mansabdars* were granted respectable *mansabs* as a matter of course.

This high proportion of *mansabdars* of foreign origin or of Hindu elite (the Rajputs) continued under Akbar's successors. During the 50 years of Aurangzeb's reign the number of the Indian *mansabdars* of 1,000 and above did not go beyond 50 per cent of the total strength, of whom 31 per cent were non-Muslims.[8]

Pattern of Power Distribution under the Mughals
(during the reign of Aurangzeb)
A. During the Period 1658-1678

Rank	*No. of Foreign Muslims*	*No. of Indian Muslims*	*No. of Rajputs*	*No. of Marathas*	*No. of Muslims of Unknown Origin*	*Total*
7,000	4	nil	2	nil	nil	6
6,000	8	1	1	2 (one of them was Shambhaji)	nil	12
5,000	23	3	3	2	2	33
4,000	20	3	3	2	2	30
3,500	9	2	4	nil	1	16
3,000	28	8	4	4	1	45
2,500	19	6	6	5	2	38
2,000	26	12	7 (including two non-Rajputs)	4	12	61
1,500	54	15	22	5	18	114
1,000	56	19	24	5	26	130
	247	69	74	31	64	485

8. Ali Athar, M.: *Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb*, Delhi, 1968. pp. 175 to 271.

B. During the Period 1679-1707

Rank	*No. of Foreign Muslims*	*No. of Indian Muslims*	*No. of Rajputs*	*No. of Marathas*	*No. of Muslims of Unknown Origin*	*Total*
7,000	8	5	nil	1 (Shahu)	3	17
6,000	9	3	1	4	1	18
5,000	13	5	7 (including three non-Rajputs)	11	8	44
4,500	1	nil	nil	nil	nil	1
4,000	23	5	3	3	3	37
3,500	16	1	9	2	3	28
3,000	26	24	8	13	7	68
2,700	nil	1	nil	nil	nil	1
2,500	24	4	6	9	5	48
2,000	27	11	6	13	15	72
1,500	43	12	17	9	21	102
1,200	1	nil	nil	nil	nil	1
1,100	nil	1	nil	nil	nil	1
1,000	36	16	24	24	25	145
	227	76	75	93	93	563

The account of the leading Mughal grandees in *Maasir-ul-Umara,* an 18th century work which covers the entire Mughal period, shows that out of 735 eminent nobles, 515 were Muslims of foreign origin and only 61 were Indian Muslims.[9] Such exaggerated importance was attached to non-Indian descent during the Mughal period that if Muslim aspirants for high government office did not have a foreign ancestor, they sometimes invented a fictitious one to improve their chances. Very often they took recourse to marrying Kashmiri girls so that their fair-complexioned progeny may pass as Iranian or Turkish.[10] The exclusive and foreign character of the power

9. Khan, Shahnavaz: *Maasir-ul-Umara,* Bibliotheca Indica No. 202, Vol. I, 1911-41, Vol. II. 1952.

10. Bernier, op. cit., p. 404.

group was kept alive throughout the Mughal period. Important families mentioned in the *Mirat-i-Ahmadi,* an 18th century chronicle of Gujarat, are Shirazis, Bukharis, Rifis and the like.[11] Decline of the Mughal power in the 18th century did not deter the inhabitants of Central Asia and Afghanistan from leaving the inhospitable land of their birth and try their luck in India. Thousands of Qizilbash (the red-caps) soldiers, who accompanied Nadir Shah in 1739, chose to stay back in India in the hope of getting employment with generous remuneration. Their hopes were not belied; they found themselves immediately under the patronage of rulers like Safdar Jung, the second Nawab of Oudh.[12] A large-scale immigration of the Afghans also took place during this period. Taking advantage of the weakness of the central authority they soon occupied the entire area known as Rohilkhand.[13] Evidently, the recruitment of the foreign Muslims was seldom done on the basis of merit alone. Once in India, an Iranian or Turani was sure to find an employment "worthy of his race." Even in the 19th and in the 20th century, the Arabs from Hijaz and Hadramwt and East African countries continued to come and find employment in the irregular forces of the Nizam of Hyderabad.[14]

The fusion of caste with class was evident in this pattern of social stratification. All the upper-class Muslims belonged mainly to the four social groups—Syeds, Shaikhs, Mughals and Pathans. Among Muslims of Indian origin, only those converted from the Kshatriya and Brahmin castes could claim parity with them. There was no social communication between these Muslims and the Muslims converted from the low-caste Hindus. The chances of the inclusion of the latter in

11. Misra, S.C.: *Muslim Communities in Gujrat,* Bombay, 1964, pp. 118, 136, 137.
12. Dutta, K. K.: *Aliwardi Khan and His Times,* 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1963, p. 63.
13. Sarkar, J.N.: *Fall of the Mughal Empire,* Vol. I, Calcutta, 1949, pp. 25, 26; Rashid, Abdur: *Najibudaulah* (trans. of Ahwal-i-Najibudaulah), Aligarh, Date? pp. 16, 18, 19.
14. Ahmad, Aziz: *Studies in Islamic Culture in Indian Environment,* London, 1964, p. 5; the commander-in-chief of Hyderabad troops who fought against the Indian army in 1948 was Edroos, an Arab. See Qureshi, op. cit., p. 18.

the ranks of the Muslim elite were always dim. It was only through some extraordinary military exploit that a lower-caste Muslim could rise above his original position and such cases were extremely rare.

This remained true up to the 19th century. Mrs Meer Hasan Ali, an English lady married to a Muslim, who spent a few years in Lucknow in the first quarter of the 19th century noticed the differences that existed between the lower-caste and upper-caste Muslims. Commenting on the Syaads she wrote : "So many advantages are enjoyed by the Syaads that it is not surprising there should be some, which have no right, anxious to be numbered with these, who are truly, the Mussulman lords (Syeds)."[15] Further, "the Syaads are very tenacious in retaining the purity of their race unsullied, particularly with respect to their daughters; a Syaad regards birth before wealth in negotiating for marriage..."[16] Mrs Meer Ali also mentions a Syed family in which the father preferred to keep his three daughters unmarried than to give them in marriage to non-Syeds.[17] The picture of the Muslim community that emerges from the Census Report of 1901 is quite revealing in this respect. We find that in every region, the Muslim communities were divided into three broad social categories: 1. Ashraf or Sharaf; 2. Ajlaf; 3. Riazil. Ashraf means noble and it included all undoubted descendants of foreigners and converts from high-caste Hindus. All converts of lower ranks were known by the contemptuous terms : "Ajlaf", "wretches" or "mean people." The lowest class of the Muslims mostly untouchables, were called "Riazil" or "base", a corruption of Rizal, "worthless", and also "Kamina" or "Itar".[18] Within each of these groups were numerous sub-groups placed in an hierarchi-

15. Ali, Meer Hasan (Mrs) : *Observation of the Mussulmans of India,* London, 1932, p. 7; also see Manucci : *Storia do Mugor,* Reprinted. Calcutta, 1966, Vol. III, p. 426.
16. Ali, Meer Hasan, op. cit., p. 8.
17. Ibid., p. 9.
18. *Census of India, General Report,* 1901 : pp. 61, 562, 568; Buchanan gives a long list of about 38 classes excluded from social communication with higher groups. In his "Some Racial Characteristics of Northern India and Bengal" Sir Ameer Ali said : "The Moham-

cal order whose social organization and norms bore close resemblance to the Hindu caste system. It would be wrong to assume that this pattern of social stratification did not break the cultural homogeneity of the Indian Muslims. The cultural attitudes and social norms that governed the world of the ignoble (Ajlaf) and worthless (Riazil) were Islamic only in name.

In spite of the virulent propaganda of Shah Waliullah and his followers, the lower-class Muslims did not Islamize their way of life completely, nor did they discard their idolatrous practices. William Crooke who made his survey of religious practices of northern India in the last decade of the 19th century comments: "The low-caste convert lives under an easy religious rule. He so far follows his faith as to circumcise his sons, and to abstain from the use of pork; but he retains his old fetishes and animistic beliefs. Even if he occasionally attends a mosque, he still clings to the worship of Devi or some village godling. His marriage ceremonies are performed not by a Kazi....but by some Dafali hedge priest, and he takes his omen from a Brahmin astrologer. If he be a Rajput, he keeps his Hindu name, simply replacing his title Singh by Khan; he shaves his beard which the real Muslim preserves; he keeps the Hindu top-knot, and bathes and cooks in the old fashion..."[19]

William Crooke's observations are amply supported by other contemporary sources as well. Commenting on the Muslim castes of the erstwhile Punjab, Ibbetson wrote (1882), "almost the only difference which the convert makes is to shave his scalp-lock, and the upper edge of his moustache, to repeat the

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medans of the upper rank consist of descendants of the Prophet (Syeds) and the Pathan settlers, whilst the lower strata are composed of the progeny of converts from Hinduism"; Aziz, K. K.: *Ameer Ali: His Life and Works*, Lahore, 1968, p. 274; also see Bourne, W. Fitz Major: *Hindustani Mussalmans and the Mussalmans of Eastern Punjab, Hand-books for the Indian Army compiled under the Orders of the Government of India, Calcutta*, 1914, pp. 33 to 36.

19. Crooke, William: *The North-West Provinces of India*, London, 1897, pp. 262-63.

Muhammedan creed in a mosque, and to add the Muhammedan to 'Hindu marriage ceremony."[20]

In Eastern Bengal, the stronghold of the Wahabis and the Faraizis, the lower-class Muslims were divided according to their occupation and employment into numerous small autonomous groups. Taylor who conducted a detailed study of the Dacca district in 1840 noted that the low-class Muslims were as exclusive as the Hindu in all social matters. Inter-caste marriages and inter-caste dining were equally uncommon amongst them. They worshipped the various forms of the goddess Kali, and freely participated in Hindu festivals like Durga Puja.[21] Observations made 60 years later in the Census of India Report of 1901 do not make a different reading. "The unreformed Muhammedans of the lower and uneducated class are deeply infected with Hindu superstitions, and their knowledge of the faith they profess seldom extends beyond the three cardinal doctrines...Before the recent crusade against idolatry, it was regular practice of the low-class Muhammedans to join in the Durga Puja and other Hindu religious festivals, and although they have been purged of many superstitions, many still remain. In particular they are very careful about omens and auspicious days. Dates for wedding are often fixed after consulting a Hindu astrologer; bamboos are not cut, nor the building of new houses commenced, on certain days of the week...When disease is prevalent, Sitala and Rakshya Kali are worshipped. Dharmraj, Mansa, and Bishari are also venerated by many ignorant Muhammedans...Even now, in some parts of Bengal they observe the Durga Puja...In Santhal Parganas, Muhammedans are often seen to carry sacred water to the shrine of Baidyanath...."[22]

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20. Quoted in Blunt, E.A.H.: *Caste System of Northern India*, Reprint, Delhi, 1969, p. 190.

21. Taylor, J.A.: *A Sketch of the Topography and Statics of Dacca*, Calcutta, 1840; Oman, J. Cambell: *Brahmans, Theists, and Muslims of India*, London, Date ? pp. 24, 25.

22. *Census of India Report*, 1901 : Vol. VI (Bengal), pp. 176, 177; Taylor, pp. 244, 245; Bose, N.K.: *Some Aspects of Caste in Bengal*, in Milton Singer's *Traditional India : Structure and Change*, Philadelphia, 1959, pp. 201, 202.

Blunt's study of the castes of northern India pertaining to the second decade of the 20th century pointed out: "In the matter of marriage the custom of communities descended from Hindu converts are often a curious mixture of Hindu and Muhammedan rites. In the first place, contrary to the Muhammedan custom, almost all of them are strictly endogamous; and many of them are divided into endogamous sections....Muhammedan Rajputs preserve their rules of hypergamy; so do the Iraqi and the Gujar, in the shape of refusing to give their daughters to families from which they have taken wives..... The Bhat goes further still; he carries out first a Hindu wedding in its fullest form and then follows it up by a Muhammedan ceremony. Many castes still employ a Brahmin pandit to fix an auspicious day for wedding and other ceremonies; such are the Bhat, the Dafali, the Ghosi, the Gujar, the Iraqi, the Kingariya, the Meo, and the Ranghar. The rules of adoption amongst the Iraqis, Mukeris, Banjaras, and Chudihars, are much more Hindu than Muhammedan. Many castes have altered the divorce law of Islam permitting it only for infidelity, and as a rule only with the consent of the panchayat; such are the Bhisti, Chudihar, Dafali, Gandhi, Irasi, Kingariya, Kunjra, and Rangrez..... In fact, most of these castes of Hindu converts preserve some traces of their marriage customs; and many preserve a great deal."[23] "But there are survivals of other Hindu customs too. The Ghosi and Kingariya, for instance, will neither eat beef themselves nor eat in the company of any Mussalman who does..... Others maintain Hindu taboos on the occasion of death. Many worship Hindu deities, especially Kali, and observe Hindu festivals. The Bhand worships a deified ancestor, Saiyid Hosain; the Bhisti worships his *mashk* (water-skin). The Dafali bathes in the Ganges in connexion with important ceremonies."[24] The Census of India Report of 1901 also mentions prevalance of the "Panchayat system" among the low-class Muslims.[25] Thus their lives were not strictly governed by the norms laid down by the tenets of Islam

23. Blunt, op. cit., p. 201.

24. Ibid., p. 204.

25. *Census of India Report*, 1901, p. 2.

but were regulated more by the indigenous traditional institutions. The authority of the Panchayat extended to all spheres of life, social as well as commercial. Marriage with other groups within the Muslim community itself was one of the offences the Panchayat took cognizance of. The result was that these low-class Muslim groups were often as strictly endogamous as the Hindu castes. A Darzi (tailor), for example, could not marry any one but a Darzi. If such rules were transgressed, the offender was at once hauled before the Panchayat and ostracised. Ordinarily, a member of one occupational group could not gain admission to another. He retained the designation of the group in which he was born even after abandoning its distinctive occupation and taking up other means of livelihood. For example, thousands of Julahas who became butchers by profession continued to be known as Julahas.

Socially as well as culturally, there was much co-operation and mutual understanding between the lower strata of the two communities. Most of the converts, in spite of having forsaken their religion, could not shake off the hold of centuries-old social traditions. They became Muslims with Hindu prejudices, superstitions and habits intact. To their Hindu neighours, they were Muslims, but culturally not strangers on that account. At the elite level, however, the socio-cultural differences were wide and sharp. For the development of a composite Indian culture, a large-scale fusion of the two cultures was required at the elite level as well. But the rigid exclusiveness practised by the elite of the two communities created a plurality of cultures of its own kind. Broadly speaking, the medieval Indian society had three very distinct cultures: culture of the Muslim elite[26], culture of the Hindu elite[27], and culture of the masses.[28]

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26. See Mujeeb, op. cit., Chaps. VI, VII, IX, XIII, XIV; Ahmad, A., op. cit., pp. 225, 229, 230, 232, 243, 253; Ashraf, op. cit., pp. 275, 276; Habibullah, op. cit., pp. 297, 308, 309; Chopra, P.N.: *Social Life during the Mughal Age*, Agra, 1955, p. 87; Pandey, A.B.: *Society and Government in Medieval India*, Allahabad, 1965, pp. 230, 231; Barani, Z., *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, Elliot and Dowson Vol. II, pp. 201 to 203; Radhey Shyam: *Kingdom of Ahmadnagar*,

The 19th century Muslim leaders conveniently closed their eyes to this living socio-cultural reality of Muslim life in India. On the contrary, they vociferously asserted that there was nothing common between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. They glorified, debated, and elaborated the abstract principles of Muslim social organization which in no way reflected the concrete realities of the Indian Muslim community. In fact men like Sir Syed Ahmad and Sir Ameer Ali, who wrote so much about the democratic spirit of Islam also believed in birth as the criterion of social status and political rights. The social fragmentation and cultural differences within the Muslim community were presumed to be insignificant. To create a basis for their politico-economic demands it was very much in their interest to project forward the mythical monolithic character of the Muslim community. Their programme of Islamization and social reform did not include items like removal of Muslim caste system. The difference between Ashraf and Ajlaf was assiduously maintained and the leadership of the Muslim community remained in the hands of the former to the detri-

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Delhi, 1966, pp. 379 to 390; Majumdar, R.C. (ed) *Bangla Desher Itihas* (in Bengali), Part II, Calcutta, 1966, pp. 246, 251.

27. Ashraf, op. cit., pp. 277, 278; Mishra, S.C.: *Rise of Muslim Power in Gujrat*, Bombay, 1963, p. 193; Pandey, op. cit., pp. 98, 99; Sastri, N.K.: *A History of South India*, 3rd ed., London, 1964, pp. 318, 319, 322 and chap. XIV, 359; Chaudhari, R.: *History of Bihar*, Delhi, 1958, pp. 180, 181; Bannerjee, A.C.: *Lectures on Rajput History*, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 46, 51; Mahalingham, T.V.: *Administration and Social Life Under Vijaynagar*, Madras, 1940, chap. X and pp. 271 to 273; Majumdar, op. cit., pp. 309, 313, 351 to 359, 363 to 369, 377, 382, 387.

28. Mujeeb, op. cit., 10 to 19; *Waqiat-i-Jahangiri*, Elliot and Dowson, Vol. VI, p. 376; Bamzai, P.N.K.: *A History of Kashmir*, Delhi 1962, p. 502; Hasan, M.: *Kashmir under the Sultans*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 226; Ray Chaudhary, T.: *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir*, Calcutta, 1953, p. 112; Majumdar, op. cit., p. 248; C.I.R. Vol. VII, Bombay, p. 59; *Census of India Report* 1911, Part I, p. 118; C.I.R. Vol. XV(U.P.) Part I, p. 141; C.I.R. 1911, Mysore, p. 61; Ghaus Ansari: *Muslim Castes in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, The Eastern Anthropology*, Vol. XIII, No. 9 (Spl. No.) pp. 50, 57; Misra, *Muslim Communities etc.* pp. 83, 84, 102, 105, 107, 135, 137, 141, 154; Chaudhari, op. cit., p. 112; Dasgupta, S.B., *Obscure Religious Cults*, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 259, 267.

ment of the larger interest of the masses as had been the case in the past.

The exclusive character of the Muslim ruling class did not rest entirely on the endogamous pattern of marriage. As is clear from the foregoing discussion, endogamy was perhaps more rigidly practiced amongst the lower-class Muslims. What set the Ashrafs apart from the other sections of their community was their distinct way of life. The rulers transplanted the cultural traditions of the countries of their origin on the Indian soil and took every step to retain them in an alien atmosphere. In their dress, habit and mental make-up the upper strata of the Muslim community differed radically from the Muslim masses and also from the elite of the Hindu community. The artificially created cultural world of these Muslims had no roots in the native soil. The attempts of Zain ul-Abidin and Akbar towards a synthesis were short-lived and did not become an integral part of the culture of the Muslim ruling class in any permanent way.[29] The cultural fusion was only peripheral and could in no way affect the separate mainstreams of the two cultures.[30]

Relationship of the Muslim ruling class with both the Muslim masses and the Hindu elite rested purely on utilitarian grounds. Being a minority, it was physically impossible for it to govern vast areas without the co-operation and support of the local people. Thus Indianization of the government of the Turko-Afghan and Mughal rulers in India was caused by the pressure of the politico-economic exigencies. It need not be regarded as symptomatic of any positive and deliberate liberalism of the rulers.[31] It is mentioned in *Maasir-ul-Umara* that Shah Tahmasp, the ruler of Persia, while discussing the loss of Indian empire with Humayun had advised him: "It appears that there are in India two parties who are distinguished for

29. Mujeeb, op. cit., pp. 247, 556.
30. Hussain, S.A.: *National Culture of India*, Bombay, 1956, p. 98; Chand, Tara; *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, 1954, pp. 141; Kabir, Humayun: *The Indian Heritage*, Bombay, 1955, pp. 1, 2; Macleod, W.H.: *Guru Nanak and Sikh Religion*, London, 1968, pp. 158 to 160; Dasgupta, op. cit., pp. 61, 75.
31. Mujeeb, op. cit., pp. 232, 233.

military qualities and leadership, the Afghan and the Rajput. At present you cannot get the Afghans on your side for there is no mutual confidence. Make them traders instead of servants and arrange with the Rajputs and cherish them."[32] A minority government could not function without seeking the support of the majority in certain areas. Furthermore, in pre-industrial society the lack of means of transport and communication made direct administration impossible at the grass-root level. For the smooth collection of revenues the Imperial government of medieval India had to rely heavily on the services of the local elite. It was because of this that, as early as the 8th century, Muhammad bin Qasim, the conqueror of Sind, had appointed Brahmins to collect taxes like the *Jaziya* in that province.[33] Commenting on the reliance of the Muslim rulers in southern India on the Brahmins, Abbe Dubois writes: "....Brahmins became necessary to the Mussalman princes themselves, who cannot govern without their assistance. The Muhammedan rulers generally make a Brahmin their secretary of state, through whose hands all the state correspondence must pass. Brahmins also frequently fill positions of secretaries and writers to the governors of the provinces and districts. Generally speaking, the Mohammedans of India are so ignorant of the first principles of public administration, and so utterly unacquainted with the simplest rules of arithmetic, that they are obliged to have recourse to the Brahmins for everything that requires enlightenment and knowledge...."[34] During the Mughal period the departments of revenue and finance, at the lower levels, were almost entirely run by the Kayasthas and Khatris. Even Aurangzeb could not dispense with their services. The order he issued for the dismissal of Hindu revenue officers had to be withdrawn at one time to save the revenue administration from disruption.[35] Nevertheless, it was not possible for the Hindu officials to climb the ladder of success rapidly and reach the top, as it was for the Muslims, particularly of foreign descent. The

32. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, op. cit., Vol. I. p. 125.
33. Chachnama. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. I. p. 184.
34. Dubois, J.A. Abbe: *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies*, 3rd ed., London, 1928, pp. 290, see also 292.
35. Khafi Khan: *Muntakhbul Lubab*, Vol. II. p. 252.

high offices of the state continued to remain a monopoly of the upper-class Muslims throughout the medieval period.

The power structure of the medieval society underwent a drastic change in the 18th century as the power and status enjoyed hitherto by the Muslim ruling class was successfully challenged by the Hindu elite. The period from the last quarter of the 17th century to the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) was a period of serious politico-economic crisis for the Muslim ruling class, a crisis from which it came out bereft of its former status and political power. The all-India status of the Muslim ruling class was reduced to only the provincial or local level during this time. In many regions, the power vacuum created by this development was filled by the rise of new Hindu elite, particularly of the Marathas and Jats. While the Marathas aimed at striking at "the trunk of the withering tree", i.e. the central imperial authority, the Jats, Sikhs and other Hindu chiefs entertained lesser ambitions of asserting their power only locally. The gradual loss of power which the Muslim elite suffered produced a bitterness amongst them which found expression not only in the battle fields but also in an increased social and cultural tension between the upper sections of the two communities. Faced with the increasing threat of the rise of the power of the Marathas and the Jats, the Muslim ruling class tried to unite itself by emphasizing the common bond of religion.

The steady rise of the Hindu power elite caused a dramatic change during the latter half of Aurangzeb's reign. The Marathas, Jats and Rajputs were growing more militant and ambitious. It was this changing political scene which created a new sense of insecurity in the Mus'im ruling class and accounted for Aurangzeb's anti-Hindu fanaticism. Aurangzeb's persecution of the Hindus has been generally interpreted as religious fanaticism but not as expression of his distorted political ambition. The political struggle between Aurangzeb and the Marathas in particular is regarded as an open confrontation between the aggressive Muslim emperor and the staunch Hindu Marathas. But a serious student of Indian history knows that Aurangzeb did not spend 25 years in the South to destroy Hinduism. His main aim was to destroy the local autonomy

of the Deccan rulers, Hindu as well as Muslim, and to make southern India an integral part of the Mughal empire.

Similarly, the Hindu posture assumed by Shivaji in his struggle against Aurangzeb, and the non-Muslim uprisings of the Jats and Satnamis during Aurangzeb's reign give an impression of a mounting "Hindu reaction" against Muslim rule. But it is worth remembering here that Shivaji had started his political career long before Aurangzeb launched his policy of persecuting the Hindus.[36] Shivaji's initial ambition was not so much to defend Hinduism, but to acquire a political status for himself by challenging first the Deccan Sultans and later the imperial authority of the Mughals through open warfare. He did not hesitate in allying himself with the Mughals from time to time to gain his political ends.[37] The Satnami rebellion which is sometimes regarded as Hindu uprising was not an attempt to defend Hinduism but was the direct result of the high-handedness of a local *foujdar*.[38] When Chhatrsal Bundela rose in rebellion against Aurangzeb, he was following the example of the Jats and the Marathas to fulfil his own political ambition. He had earlier served the Mughals in two wars, including the war against Shivaji, and had received no reward for it. His alienation from the Mughals was largely the result of personal dissatisfaction; there was no ideology behind it.[39]

The general persecution of the Hindus by Aurangzeb, in our view, does not indicate any frontal attack on Hindusim as such. His wrath against the Hindus had a political rather than a religious motivation. The frequent ignominous reverses suffered by the Mughal armies at the hands of the Marathas and during the numerous non-Muslim uprisings in the north made him set his sight firmly on two objectives which were purely political: one, to make the Mughal government exclusively Muslim at the top; and two, to reduce the Hindus to the status of a conquered people.

Some modern Muslim historians have denied this by point-

36. Sarkar, J.N.: *Shivaji and His Times*, Calcutta, 1948, p. 34.
37. Ibid., pp. 124, 126, 160.
38. Elliot and Dowson, op. cit., p. 294.
39. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 321.

ing out the presence of a large number of Hindus in the imperial service. It is true that the Mughal government, pressed by its administrative needs, continued to fall back on the Hindu officials at the lower levels even during the reign of Aurangzeb, but after the death of Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh in 1669 and 1678, respectively, one does not hear of a single Hindu holding a high *mansab* with the exception of Shahu who was a captive in the Mughal harem. Similarly, the anti-Hindu measures of Aurangzeb like the imposition of the *Jaziya,* demolition of temples and forcible conversions of the Hindus were not an expression of Islamic ideology alone. They were the old cultural symbols which the early Turkish conquerors had chosen to assert their political supremacy in India. Victories over the infidel kings were generally accompanied by such symbolic measures. Even after the Indianization of the conquerors and in spite of the liberal policy of Akbar, these symbols had continued to be a part of the Muslim political tradition.

When Akbar abolished certain taxes levied exclusively on the Hindus, it was not just a simple recognition of religious equality between the two communities, but was also a recognition of the political equality between the conqueror and the conquered within his empire. But this interlude in the history of the Muslim rule in India did not last long, and there was a marked change even in the reign of his immediate successor, Jahangir. Although Jahangir did not reimpose the *Jaziya* and other similar taxes on the Hindus, he did not hesitate to resort to the methods employed by the Sultans of Delhi earlier to assert the supremacy of the Muslim rule. For example, Jahangir commemorated his victory of Kangra by a ceremonial public sacrifice of a cow.[40] Humiliation of the conquered people through hurting their religious sentiments was in fact one way of a relentless assertion of the Mughal ruling power. This is why, though not enjoined by the Quran, cow-slaughter had become one of the most cherished rights of the Muslim community in India. Surrendering of this right, therefore, is sometimes interpreted as surrender to Hindu political domination and as amounting to a religious persecution of the Muslims. The reversal of the policies enunciated by Akbar

40. *Tujuk-i-Jahangiri* (Eng. Tran. Rogers). Vol. II. Delhi. 1968, p. 223.

became most glaring during the reign of Aurangzeb, who asserted that his government was founded on the tenets of the *Shariat*. By discriminating against the Hindus and resurrecting the old practices to make them more aware of their inferior political position, Aurangzeb, the great-grandson of Akbar, relinked the history of the Mughals with that of the early Sultans. By denying politico-legal parity to the Hindus, he re-emphasized once again the difference between the rulers and the ruled. This was decidedly a retrograde step in many respects. The Muslim elite, both the Ulema and the nobility, supported the Emperor's orthodox policies for their own selfish ends. The constant profession of loyalty to the orthodox creed by the Ulema and the Muslim nobility is easily understandable. It is clear that liberalism like that preached and practised, by Akbar, would have inevitably led to an increased infiltration of the non-Muslims in the imperial government of Delhi. On the other hand, adherence to an orthodox stand to maintain the Islamic character of the state, could have helped to keep the state exclusively in the Muslim hands.

The anti-Hindu posture of Aurangzeb served two definite ends. Socially it created a wider gulf between the two communities and brought about a greater sense of social and emotional solidarity amongst the Muslims. On the political plane, discriminatory laws against the Hindus served to mark out and distinguish the conqueror from the conquered. It was easy for Aurangzeb to find religious sanctions for his politically motivated measures. The concept of the inequality of the Muslims and the non-Muslims, enshrined in the Islamic law, could always be invoked in their justification. In the words of the author of *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri*, Razi Khan, Aurangzeb "strove to the utmost to strengthen the Din-i-Matin (firm faith, i.e. Islamic religion) and to give prevalence to the Shariat-i-Sayidu-i-Mursilin (Law of the Prophet) .... Further, in accordance with the Quranic verse 'Honour to the believers and disgrace to the infidels', the followers of the religion (Islam) observing the precepts of the Prophet (Sunnat-i-Khatimun-Nabi) were recipients of the greatest favours."[41] The way the

41. Razi, Aqil Khan: *Waqiat-i-Alamgiri* (Eng. Trans), Delhi, 1946, pp. 45, 46: The author of *Alamgirnama*, Muhammad Kazim writes.

Muslim chroniclers continued to condemn the heresies of Dara even after Aurangzeb's death and the way they applauded Aurangzeb for his measures against the "enemies of his true religion" show clearly how the *Shariat* was being understood in the medieval times.[42]

Aurangzeb's efforts to save the declining prestige of the Mughal imperial power through an assertion of the superiority of the Muslim ruling classes failed to check the ambitions of Hindu groups which were busy building up their power during his reign. The emergence of the Marathas as a political power and the prolonged wars Aurangzeb had to wage against them proved most disastrous for the Mughal empire. The Mughal troops did manage to nullify the conquests of Shivaji by occupying the Maratha forts after his death and inflicting a crushing defeat on his successor. But the myth of the invincibility of the Mughals had been shattered by the successes of Shivaji. It had become urgent for the Mughal government to save its face. To keep alive the myth of Mughal invincibility, the Emperor and his officers bribed the Maratha Sardars to take possession of the forts which they were not able to subjugate in spite of continued warfare. At times they tried to avoid the disgrace of defeat by entering into secret pacts with the Maratha commanders, allowing them to collect *chauth* and other taxes from the area under their jurisdiction.[43]

Once the myth of invincibility of the Mughal power was

"Dara Shukoh in his later days did not restrain himself to the free thinking and heretical notions which he had adopted under the name of *tasawwuf*, but showed an inclination for the religion and institution of the Hindus. He was constantly in the society of the Brahmans, Jogis and Sanyasis and he used to regard these worthless teachers of delusions as learned and true masters of wisdom. He considered their books (the Vedas)... (as) revealed from heaven and he called them ancient and excellent books.... It became manifest that if Dara Shukoh obtained the throne and established his power, the foundation of the faith would be in danger and the precepts of Islam would be changed for the cant of infidelity and Judaism." (Elliot and Dowson), Vol. VII, p. 179; also see Khafi Khan, op. cit., p. 214.

42. Elliot and Dowson, op. cit., pp. 179, 214.

43. *Maasir-ul-Umara*, Vol. I, p. 219.

destroyed, the none too submissive Hindu rajas, zamindars, Kolis, Jats, and Mewatis gained greater confidence and defied the imperial officers with impunity.[44] Foujdars of distant provinces appropriated the imperial revenue, oppressed the local peasantry and for all practical purposes acted as petty independent chiefs causing a sharp decline in the state income and making the position of the Muslim ruling class precarious. The Mughal ruling class could have salvaged its position and prolonged the life of the empire by abdicating some of its earlier rights and attitudes and including the Hindu power elite on equal basis in the imperial service. But such a policy was neither acceptable nor adopted. Guided by their narrow interests, they, like the Marathas, Jats, Sikhs and other petty chieftains, completed the ruin of the Mughal empire. The growing weakness of the Mughal empire was noticed by contemporary European travellers who did not forget to insert a few lines in their travelogues to suggest to their respective countrymen that India could be theirs for the taking.[45]

The failure of the Mughals to crush the rising power of the Marathas had thoroughly demoralised the members of the Muslim ruling class who were not prepared to jeopardise their position any more by coming into a head-long collision with the Marathas. In the years that followed the death of Aurangzeb they tried to avoid the ultimate catastrophe by keeping the Marathas in good humour. It was for this reason that Emperor Muhammad Shah was advised by his courtiers to exercise caution and moderation with respect to the erstwhile enemies of the empire. Military dependence of the Emperor left him with no option but to follow this advice and he sent instructions to the provincial governors not to displease the Marathas. Aliwardi Khan, the governor of Bengal, was told to pay *chauth*

44. Ali, op. cit., pp. 163, 333, 430, 750, 758, 799; Srivastava, op. cit., p. 31.

45. Mannuci told his countrymen: "...I will assert from what I have seen and tested, that to sweep it (Mughal Empire) entirely away and occupy the whole empire nothing is required beyond a corps of thirty thousand trusty European soldiers, led by competent commanders who would thereby easily acquire the glory of great conquerors." op. cit., Vol. II, p. 414; also see Bernier, op. cit., p. 55; Trevernier, op. cit., p. 311.

of that province to Baji Rao.[46] When Munim Khan managed to expel the Marathas from Ahmedabad and conveyed the happy news to the Court, the Vakil of the Emperor wrote: "He should not expect help from the treasury and army from His Majesty. Domination and ascendancy of the Dekhanis had reached such a pitch and had crossed such a limit that the courtiers had no power to show hostility towards them...."[47] Emperor Muhammad Shah also felt it necessary to add that the Subedar should "behave well with the Marathas....in accordance with the exigency of time."[48]

No doubt, suggestions were made sometimes for the formation of a Muslim confederacy to destroy the "Kafirs"; but they were motivated purely by selfish reasons. When Nizam Asaf Jah Bahadur requested the Emperor to give a lead in this direction he was doing so only to seek protection for his state in the Deccan to fight the Maratha danger.[49] His advice to his sons and successors however was quite different: In the Testament of the Nizam, as recorded in *Risal-i-Darbare Asafia* of Munshi Mansaram, we find him telling his successors that "it is necessary for the ruler of the Deccan who desires safety, peace from war and prosperity of his country, to have peace with the Marathas who are the *zamindars* of this country. As far as it lies in his power, he should not, from his side, break accord with them."[50] The Nizam who was also vociferous in demanding immediate action against the Marathas, willingly entered into a pact with them in order to safeguard his own dominion. Instead of checking their advance into the north, he allowed them to embark on a career of *Mulkgiri* beyond the Narmada. Addressing his officers, the Nizam said: "It is necessary to take our hands off Malwa. God willing, I will enter into an understanding with them (Marathas) and entrust the *Mulkgiri* on that side of the Narmada to them. I will arrange other matters that

46. Salim, Gulam Hussain: *Riyazus Salatin* (Eng. Trans.), Calcutta, 1902, p. 351.

47. Ali Mohammad, op. cit., p. 806.

48. Ibid., p. 540.

49. See *Munshat-i-Musawi Khan* in Rao, op. cit., p. 150.

50. Mansaram, op. cit., p. 61.

way. Their armies will not enter my jurisdiction...."[51] But the same Nizam when writing about his wars against the Marathas to the Delhi Court referred to them as *Jehad*. He sought the imperial help by pointing out that "the aim behind the activities of these people is simply this. To decrease the income of the Mujahids (Muslims), to inflict injury on the strength of the Muslem through these off and on harassments, and to deprive the Muslem the strength to wage *Jehad*."[52]

Since the provincial *nawabs* could no longer depend on Delhi for help, it would have been more expedient on their part if they had tried to gather support from the local Hindu rajas and zamindars by including them in the ruling class in their respective areas. But this was not done. The provincial governments remained predominantly Muslim at the higher levels. With the decline in the wealth and power of Delhi the members of the Muslim ruling class had started migrating gradually to the provincial centres of Muslim power. This influx of nobles from Delhi helped the Nawabs to repeat the imperial pattern in the provinces. They kept Hindu participation in their government limited to the subordinate revenue services. Occasionally a Kayastha or a Khatri got promoted to the office of the Diwan. If they left any significant amount of power in the hands of the Hindu rajas and zamindars, it was done under compulsion. For example, Saadat Khan and Safdar Jung had realized difficulties in dislodging these hereditary local chiefs and were forced to recognize their local autonomy.[53]

The economic crisis suffered by the Muslim elite as a result of the constant warfare in the 18th century was further intensified by their extravagant way of life. In their social attitudes, the Muslim elite of the 18th century India eminently deserved the appellation of what Thorastein Veblen calls the "leisure class". The worth of a man was judged by his possession of social graces and not by his ability or hard work. The excessive emphasis laid on ceremonial observances and polite usage

51. Mansaram: *Masir-i-Nizami* in Rao, op. cit., Anecdote No. 76, p. 122.
52. *Letter of Nizamul Mulk* in Rao, op. cit., pp. 143, 145.
53. Srivastava, A. L.: *First Two Nawabs of Awadh, Agra*, 1959, pp. 34, 35, 37 to 40.

in the courts of the Muslim Nawabs left little chance for an ordinary Muslim to enter the elite group. Any work which required physical exertion was almost a taboo amongst the members of the upper classes. For example, a Muslim of good breeding would never consent to enlist himself as a foot soldier in the infantry. Contrasting the Maratha soldiers with Mughal army, Ghulam Ali Azad (d. 1785), the author of *Khazan-i-Amira,* comments: "Now-a-days the army of the Ganim (Marathas) consists of low people like cultivators, shepherds and artisans. On the other hand, the army of Islam consists of men of high family and breeding. The reason for the victory of Ganims is that they do not hesitate to undertake hard work.... These men of high breeding and character have courage and sense of honour. The low class people of the Ganims do not possess these high qualities."[54]

As the opportunities for military conquests decreased, "conspicuous leisure" became the greatest mark of respectability. New traditions and new methods of recreation were invented to maintain social eminence. Cock-fights, pigeon-fights, kite flying and Urdu poetry of a certain genre became associated with the aristocratic pattern of life. The transformation of the Muslim upper class into a "spurious leisure class" had thus become inevitable. The economic condition and social attitudes of respectable Muslim families in the last quarter of the 19th century, as described by Hunter, were the result of the social norms which developed in the 18th century.

The new political environment in which the Muslim elite found themselves in the 18th century did not draw them any closer to the Muslim masses. The gulf between the two segments of the Muslim community remained wide as ever. Laying stress on respectability, Nizam Asaf Jah had commented: "It is but proper to encourage respectable people and entrust them with authority, because merit and capacity are to be found among such respectable people and not among all."[55] In saying so, the Nizam had expressed a belief universally shared by the members of the Muslim upper classes, namely, that most

54. Rao, op. cit., p. 228.

55. *Masir-i-Nizami,* Ibid., Anecdote No. 123, p. 92.

respectable Muslims came from Central Asia and he considered it his special duty, therefore, to protect the interests of this group. He clearly explained his policy towards the foreign Muslims in these words: "I have constituted the brotherhood of se!ect men. Many respectable persons came here from *vilayat* (Central Asia) especially the Mughal, who serve here and obtain high status. The Deccan had become their settling ground. Their status and authority are far above that of other servants. They constitute a special brotherhood. It becomes easy for me to pick up people from among these possessing special merit, courage and capacity and give them high posts...."[56]

One of the most significant features of Hindu-Muslim politics in the 18th century is the unwillingness of the Muslim ruling class to accept either a subordinate, or even an equal position in relation to the newly rising Hindu power elite. The change in their fortune was regarded as a chastisement from God. They refused to believe that the Kafirs could also possess the ability to conquer and rule. Although the elite of the two communities continued to co-operate with each other as before in the manner adopted throughout the period of Muslim rule in India, their roles had been reversed in the 18th century. Now it was the Muslim rulers and nobles who were seeking the help of the Marathas, Sikhs and Jats. The co-operation of the Hindu elite in the past was neither irksome nor humiliating, for it could easily be obtained by the politically superior Muslim elite who were always in a position to grant favours, bestow jagirs, or install usurpers in place of legitimate heirs in a Hindu kingdom. Now all this had changed. The Hindu elite had not to look up to the Muslim rulers for such favours any more. They could seize wealth and land by more direct methods and the use of force. Now they rendered military help to the Muslim rulers not as tributories but as paid allies whose services could be obtained only on the basis of payment of allowances mutually agreed upon.

Under the pressure of this changed situation, the latent tensions existing within the Muslim ruling class came

56. Ibid., Anecdote No. 21, p. 92.

out openly on the surface.[57] Its members got divided into smaller factions, leaders of which strove hard to capture those offices of the imperial government which would place the resources of the imperial treasury and army under their command.[58] Their internal rivalry and antagonism did not allow them to evolve any consistent and definite attitude towards the rising Hindu powers. They considered it more advantageous and diplomatic to maintain an attitude of deliberate ambivalence in this regard. With the attenuation of political and economic compulsions, the Muslim ruling class had necessarily to fall back on religion to maintain their cohesion and identity. Ready appeal could be made on grounds of religious unity to close the ranks against Hindu enemies. Wars fought merely for political survival came to be conveniently declared as *Jehads*. The political success of the Hindu powers was taken as humiliation of Islam, and what was in fact a conflict between the power elite of the two communities was interpreted as the conflict between Islam and *Kufr*.

To quote one example, when the ambitious Afghan upstart. Najibudaula usurped the imperial authoriy as the Regent, he conveniently assumed the posture of being the protector of Islam in order to win the support of the old nobility against the Marathas. It was an obvious attempt to cover up and disguise his blatantly political ambitions since the Marathas had been supporting his chief rival, Wazir Imadud Mulk. Najibudaula had allied himself with Ahmad Shah Abdali and had invited him to invade India to secure his own position.[59] But he made it appear that he was making an appeal to the Afghan ruler for the protection of Islam in India. However, the same Najibudaula, "the regenerator and defender of the empire and Islam in India" was anxious to conclude a friendly alliance with the Jats.[60] In 1770, when "he could no longer

57. Srivastava, op. cit., pp. 51, 52, 168-69, 183, 191; Rashid, op. cit., pp. 10, 24, 34.
58. See Chandra, S., op. cit.
59. Rashid, op. cit., pp. 38, 43, 46, 70.
60. Najibudaula wrote to Jawahar Singh : "We should consider ourselves fortunate that two provinces of the Empire are in our hands without any partner. If one of us is ruined, it will automatically

depend on foreign assistance, (he) allied himself with the Marathas." However, he eminently succeeded in his ruse, as what he did for personal reasons has been interpreted as an ideologically inspired act even by some 20th century scholars.[61]

It was not only the power elite but also the Ulema who used religious slogans to satisfy their personal political ambitions. Dependent on the state patronage for their survival, they could not remain indifferent to the expansion of Hindu political influence. As long as the reins of political power remained exclusively in Muslim hands, the Ulema were satisfied by merely censoring the acts of rulers who transgressed the limits laid down by the *Shariat*. But with the decline of the Muslim power at the centre the role of the Ulema also changed. The Ulema saw a danger to Islam in the rise of the non-Mus'im powers like the Marathas and Jats. They now furnished the necessary religious ideology for the mobilization of Muslim masses against the non-Muslim powers.

For the Ulema the fate of Islam was integral'y linked with the political power of the Muslims. The danger to the political power of the Muslims was seen to constitute a danger to Islam itself. The concern of the Ulema for the preservation of Muslim rule in India had reasons sacred as well as profane. As interpreters of the Quranic Law and guardians of the Muslim learning, they manned almost all non-military posts. Sadrs, Qazis, Muftis, Khatibs and teachers were all drawn from this class of the religious elite, who, like the Muslim upper classes, depended on the government for their sustenance.[62]

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lead to the ruin of the other as well. If you agree I am willing to enter into a treaty with you..." Rashid, op. cit., p. 70.

61. Rashid, op. cit., pp. 77, 78; See also Professor Muhammad Habib's Foreword to "*Shah Waliullah Dehlvi ke Siyasi Maktubat*, and Professor Abdur Rashid's Introduction to the same.

62. Shaik Abdul Gangoh wrote to Babur: ".....Pious Muslims should be posted to the provinces so that they may collect taxes in accordance with the principles of *Shara*. No *Kafir* should find any office or employment in the Diwan of Islam as well as in the capital of Islam. Posts of Amil should be barred to them. Furthermore, in conformity with the principle of *Shara*, they should be subjected to all types of indignities.... They should not be allowed to consider themselves equal to Muslims, so that the glory

The ideological commitments of the Ulema were such that they could not visualize a situation in which political power was wielded by the non-Muslims. Violent changes that took place in the power structure in the 18th century India, therefore, became the cause of great concern to the religious elite since they were now confronted with the fact of an Islamic society minus political sovereignty. The decline of the Mughal power was bound to hit the interests of the Ulema and the Muslim jagirdars and *mansabdars* alike. When the political authority was gradually slipping out of the Muslim hands and the *Kafirs* such as Marathas, Jats, Sikhs, English etc. were emerging as new rulers in India, it is not surprising that the Ulema adopted a militant posture. They raised the religious cry for *Jehad* to protect the crumbling Muslim power. In order to keep Islam in India alive they took upon themselves the responsibility of rejuvenating the decadent Mughal empire. They were confident that if the hollow title of the Mughal Emperor could be made a reality, the infidels would be crushed and Islam would flourish again. Thus in the 18th century the role of the Ulema underwent a fundamental change: the guides of the Muslim community became the protectors of Muslim state. The law of Islam with which the Ulema were seriously concerned could not prevail if there was no Muslim authority to enforce it. The aim of the Ulema, therefore, was to sustain that authority and to make it operative again.

Shah Waliullah (1703–1762) was the first religious leader to play this new role. To him should go the credit of politicising religion and creating a new role for the Indian Ulema which they have not abandoned ever since. The economic ruin of the Muslim upper classes and the occupation of "the cities of the Muslims" by the *Kafirs* made Shah Waliullah extremely unhappy.[63] He started a vigorous propaganda amongst the reluctant Mughal nobles to defend Islam and the Mughal

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of Islam may reach zenith." Quoted in Rizvi, S.A.A.: *Muslim Revivalist Movements in Northern India*, Lucknow, 1965, pp. 245; also see pp. 11, 13, 210-11, 394.

63. Nizami, K.A.: *Shah Waliullah Dehlvi ke Siyasi Maktubat* (Political Letters of Shah Waliullah of Delhi), Aligarh, 1950, Letter No. 2, p. 49.

power from total collapse.[64] However, his hope that a timely warning would unite the warring members of the Muslim upper classes, evaporated very rapidly. In despair, Shah Waliullah turned to Najibudaula, the Afghan adventurer who had come to India in 1753, and to Ahmad Shah Abdali. He wrote to the Afghan King: "The power of the Kafir Marathas must be destroyed and the defenceless Muslims must be liberated from the claws of the non-Muslims. *If the power of the Kafirs remained like this the Muslims will forget Islam, and after some time the Quam (nation) of the Muslims will become such a Quam that Islam will become indistinguishable from Kufr. This also is a great calamity* and except you no one else has got the power to mitigate."[65] One of the main reasons that induced Shah Waliullah to invite Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India was the economic plight of the Muslim upper classes. After describing the increasing power of the Marathas, Shah Waliullah informed the Afghan King: "Due to the carelessness of the Emperor, condition has become such that the jagirdars have no control over their *jagirs*.... When the imperial treasury got exhausted, cash payments were also stopped. All those dependent on the government have got scattered and have taken up the bowls of beggar in their hands. Nothing is left in the Empire except its name. When the condition of the servants of the Emperor is such, one can imagine the state of those who were pensionholders or merchants...."[66] He also added that since the actual government was in the hands of the Hindu *Musaddis* and *Karkuns*, the Hindu houses were full with all kinds of riches, while the condition of the Muslims was extremely pitiable.[67]

Shah Waliullah's propaganda helped but little in the realization of his dreams. Najibudaula, the man on whom he had pinned his hopes, was ultimately forced to form an alliance with the Marathas to save his petty *jagirs*. Ahmad Shah Abdali was so much harassed by the Sikhs that he had to withdraw from Punjab altogether. The major part of northern India thus con-

64. Ibid., see Letters Nos. 5, 6, 8, 12, 15, 20 and 22.
65. Ibid., Letter No. 2 written to Ahmad Shah Abdali.
66. Ibid., p. 50.
67. Ibid., p. 51.

tinued to remain in the hands of the non-Muslims till the British conquest in the middle of the 19th century. The destiny of the Muslim ruling class therefore could not be altered in spite of the hopes of men like Shah Waliullah. Reduced in power and wealth, the Muslim elite were left with the nostalgia of bygone days to nurse their wounds. They could never get reconciled to the rule of their former subjects.

The increased tension between the elite of the two communities in the politico-social sphere sometimes took on a religious form and erupted in communal riots. The most common were those which started over the question of cow-slaughter. Just as the *Jaziya* and demolition of temples had become symbols of Muslim supremacy, the protection of cow had emerged as the symbol of the rising Hindu power. This explains the Muslim insistence on cow sacrifice in the 18th century and the Hindu determination to prevent it. There were instances of communal riots in Gujarat over this issue. We are informed by Ali Muhammad of a serious riot started by the Muslims over the news of Havaldar of Kalupur having taken away a cow by force from one of the Bohras of that place. It resulted in much bloodshed and normalcy was restored only when Ajit Singh, the governor of Gujarat, intervened and allowed the Qazi to carry away the cow for the Id sacrifice.[68]

A minor incident sometimes could trigger off a serious riot. The most serious outburst of communal frenzy was caused in Gujarat by the carelessness of a Hindu who chose to throw colour on a Muslim passer-by during the Holi festivities. The latter at once appealed to his co-religionists to rectify the wrong. "All the Muslim sepoys and tradesmen, residents of the city and suburbs, in groups and sections shouting 'religion' 'religion' (Din) gathered from every corner and side. The whole crowd was bent upon killing and looting the Hindus.'[69] The colour-throwing incident, however, was only a mask. The real reason for this riot was the rivalry between Kapurchand Bhansali, a leading Nagar Seth, and Mulla Abdul Aziz, one of the leading Bohra merchants.[70] According to Ali Muhammad "the

68. Ali Mohammad, op. cit., p. 371.
69. Ibid., p. 358.
70. Ibid., p. 359.

unemployed soldiers looked upon such incidents as a means of earning subsistence."[71]

The Gujarati Muslims often expressed their resentment against the Maratha rule by indulging in religious fanaticism against the local Hindus. As recorded by Ali Muhammad Khan, with the break-down of Muslim power in Gujarat, the Hindus became very defiant and erected new temples and restarted worship of their idols in public. "One such temple was built in Shapur within the city by the side of a mosque. At the time of call to prayer and readiness, they blew their bugle and rang the bell like untimely crowing of a cock. It proved a terrible nuisance to the Muslims. The local people therefore reported this fact to Qazi Muhammad Nizam-ud-din Khan. The Qazi was moved by religious feelings. On Friday after performance of the prayer he went to the spot on foot with a party of the Muslims and demolished the temple."[72]

"After the Marathas were expelled from Khambhayat by Rashid Beg and his confederates" reports Ali Muhammad, the Muslim citizens in celebration of the victory "let loose stallion bulls.....followed them, killed some tongue-less creatures and distributed their parts."[73] The butchers "happily painted a cow with spilled belood and carviced it to the slaug hterhourse. As against the past and amends for the bygone days a sacrificial cow was sacrificed and the shop was decorated with it. Some of the Sindhis de ecrated a newly-built temple by Kahan Seth Karori of Kathera Pacha situated on the road to Khidki."[74] The chronicler of Gujarat gloated over this incident as "one of the best events of the city" and sent its full report to the Delhi Courts.[75] It is interesting to note that one of the most prominent confederates of Rashid Beg and one who helped him in defeating the Marathas was Shamburam, a Nagar Brahmin.

When the news of Bhakt Singh's appointment as the *subedar* of Gujarat reached the Gujarati Muslims, a petition signed by the nobles and the Ulema to show their disapproval was sent

71. Idem.
72. Ibid., p. 722.
73. Idem.
74. Idem.
75. Idem.

to the Delhi Court. The petition was more a charge-sheet against the Hindus in general than a plaint against Bhakt Singh. The opposition to Bhakt Singh's appointment was not due to any wrong committed by him. It was based on the wrongs committed by his brother Abhay Singh who had been one time the Subedar of Gujarat. The petition prepared by the Gujarati Muslims ran like this: "It is a request to His Majesty (Ahmed Shah) .... from *all the Muslims such as eminent Syeds, honourable learned men, and royal officers* of His Majesty that the following state of affairs prevailed in the city of Ahmedabad and the *parganas* under the jurisdiction of the subah of Gujrat during the *subedari* of Maharaja Abhay Singh: plunder and pillage of property and wealth of the poor....insult and dishonour of Islam, defamation of Muslims, demolition of masjids and houses of saintly persons, prevalence of Hindu usages, falsehood, sale and purchase of intoxicants and pigs publicly in every lane and bazar... His Rajput confederates captured Muslim women by temptation and inducement and some by force and fright, converted them to heresy and carried them off to Marwar. A great calamity to Islam is that those Muslim women are still alive in that region. The Muslims have no remedy for their liberation from the hands of the unbelievers.... Under divine guidance and royal fortune they (Muslims of Gujrat) remained protected and preserved against their false intentions to make this city of Islam added to the zamindari of Marwar like Nagar and Jalor and to destroy Muslims."[76]

The Muslim reaction to the rise of Hindu power did not remain confined to the raising of religious slogans for the protection of Islam. Sometimes it took the form of ridiculing the Hindu persona'ities and groups that were gaining political eminence. How one section of the Muslim community looked at the rise of the Maratha power is best illustrated in the ridicule heaped by Ghulam Ali Azad Bilgrami on Peshwa Baji Rao and the Brahmins of Maharashtra in general. We are told that after the death of Shahu "the sacred thread and Namaskars (Brahmins) began to dominate the affairs of the kingdom. The community, which was a beggar by profession began to claim

76. Ibid., p. 702.

kingship...."[77] The Brahmins are described by Bilgrami as people with "strange character." "Wherever they become dominant they deprive the people of that area of all means of subsistence and appropriate them for themselves.... They want that all land should belong only to the Brahmins of Konkan. As God provides food and means of subsistence like land to Hindus and Muslims alike, how is it *possible that only one community should be the owner of all land?* Look at the nature and character of this community, that with all land of which Balaji has possessed himself in the Deccan and Northern India, his food is only Bajra and Jowar.... The real profession of these Brahmins is begging. It is the custom among the Hindus to give charity to these people. From generation to generation this community is accustomed to begging.... That is why in spite of attaining supreme power, the element of begging is not absent from their community. Whenever they meet any one, these people take away everything, leaving the people to their fate. It has been well said by a poet that when beggars become kings they reduce the world to beggary."[78]

The change in the distribution of power caused by the steady rise of the strong Hindu power groups in the 18th century made the Muslims more self-conscious of the supreme role they had played in Indian history during the preceding centuries. In the hour of their political recession, they started priding themselves on their inherent superiority on grounds of their earlier successes on the Indian historical scene. Frustrated by his failure to secure the appointment of some Muslims in the Maratha state services, Bilgrami wrote: *"It is nearly 700 years that the Muslim rulers have occupied India....* Balaji and Bhau and their followers are proud of their power and say that they would free Deccan and northern India from the hands of the Muslims. This is a vain boast. There is no instance of a territory under the Muslim rulers ever having passed into the hands of the Hindu rajas. Nor have the Hindus been able to advance towards Kabul and occupy Muslim territory. On the other hand, Muslims have advanced from Iran and Turan

77. Bilgrami, Ghulam Ali Azad: *Khazan-i-Amira*, Lucknow, Date? p. 47.
78. Ibid., pp. 48, 49.

and have followed the tradition of Ashwamedha performed by Yudhisthir. During the last 1,200 years no army from India, whether belonging to Hindu rajas, or to Muslim rulers, ever invaded the Muslim countries."[79] Shahjahan's armies reached Balkh "but these armies of Shahjahan consisted of men, among whom many belonged to those countries."[80] These words of Bilgrami bear striking resemblance to some of the utterances of the 20th century Muslim leaders to prove the superiority of the Muslims over the Hindus.

79. Ibid., p. 110.
80. Ibid., p. 111.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GENESIS OF MUSLIM COMMUNALISM

THE establishment of British rule in India brought in its train a new calamity for the upper-class Muslims. They "felt as if the end of the world had come. Those who had dominated the Government services felt 'the rock on which they had stood firmly for centuries was now slipping away from under their feet'."[1] Since Bengal was the first to pass under the British political dominance, the first impact of the change of political power was felt by the Muslim elite in that region. The privileged position of the upper-class Muslims of Bengal was based wholly on their administrative control over the province. Unlike the Hindu *zamindars* of Bengal, they had no hereditary control over the land and did not constitute a residential rural class independent of the state except in a few areas. Subedar Murshid Quli Khan who had himself bought a *taluqa* to provide his family with economic security did not encourage his officers to follow his example. As a result, when the British took over the administration of Bengal, there were few large Muslim *zamindars* in the province. Deprived of political power, the Muslim elite were cut off from their main source of support. Loss of political power combined with the lack of a rural base, made their existence precarious. As long as Persian continued to be the language of the government and the law-courts, the urban Muslim elite were able to make a living as employees of the government and judges of the law-courts. But the substitution of English for Persian in 1838 further turned the balance against them in favour of the Hindu elite who showed a greater aptitude for learning English. Bhola Nath Chandra, who visited Murshidabad in the middle of the 19th century, found that many of the noble Muslim families of this former seat of power had gone back to Delhi

1. Hussain, S.A.: *The Destiny of Indian Muslims*, Bombay, 1965, p. 127.

or Iran. The Ashraf families who remained in Bengal were to be found mainly in the cities of Dacca, Murshidabad, Bardwan, Hoogly and Calcutta. They spoke Urdu and were a class entirely different from the mass of rural Muslims who spoke Bengali. The Muslim elite of the rest of northern India fared better. Unlike the upper-class Muslims of Bengal they did not solely rely on the government for their economic support. Taking advantage of the anarchy that followed the decline of the Mughal empire, they had carved out big *jagirs* for themselves and were in a position to continue their old pattern of life without any radical modification. Even after the British annexation of Sind, Punjab and Oudh, these *jagirdars* managed to retain large areas of land under their possession. Thus the economic leadership of the community stayed in the hands of the aristocrats. However, in no part of India did the 19th century cataclysmic political changes dislodge the Muslim upper class from its social and cultural leadership of the Muslims. Nor did they usher in any organic change in the social structure of the Muslim community which continued to retain its medieval character.[2]

No political pressure was strong enough to break the insularity of the Muslim upper classes. The new political situation did not create in them any new vision. They rose against the foreign rulers in 1857 not with the ambition of creating a new world, but to save a world which was now beyond all saving. Their ultimate failure only helped to strengthen further their obscurantist tendencies. The anger against the foreign rulers was extended to even those liberal aspects of their government from which the upper-class Muslims could have derived substantial benefits for themselves and at the same time advanced the interests of their community. In other words, they did not cultivate any progressive tendencies. The new urban society that developed after the Mutiny had no organic link with the urban society of the past. It was an artificial creation and not the culmination of a gradual process of social evolution from medieval to modern. In such circumstances, the

2. Mujeeb, op. cit., p. 507; Misra, B.B.: *The Indian Middle Classes*, London, 1961, pp. 387, 388.

tendency of the Muslim upper class to shun modernization rendered it an obsolete force in terms of political and social dynamism. No revolutionary philosophy could be conceived by a class of *zamindars* and *taluqdars* whose interests could be preserved only by remaining politically passive.

In the last quarter of the 19th century when after the vigorous propaganda of men like Sir Syed Ahmad the upper-class Muslims were shaken from their apathy and decided in favour of Western education and partial modernization, they discovered to their dismay that all middle-class callings whether in trade, professions or government, were in the hands of the Hindus. The resultant wide economic disparity between the educated upper classes of the two communities accentuated the already existing feelings of frustration and resentment among the Muslims.

Dissatisfaction of the upper-class Muslims with the politico-economic policies of the British Government was equally shared by non-Muslim upper and middle classes. Educated Indians, influenced by Western ideals of democracy and freedom, soon formed a forum to express their grievances in the language of secular nationalism. It is at this juncture that the upper-class Muslims, who had lived in a state of splendid isolation till now, were faced with their major politcal and psychological problem. They could see that their survival very much depended on their active participation in national politics. The foundation of the Indian National Congress had shown them the way to break their political isolation and make an effective reappearance on the national political scene. The time had come when they could combine their strength with the rest of their countrymen and demand the redress of the just grievances of the Indians, including the grievances of their own class. But barring few exceptions, the majority of the upper-class Muslims did not take the required bold step to break away from their traditional past. Instead, for nearly two decades, they remained in a state of political indecision until a *via media* was discovered in a new political doctrine which could accommodate political participation by the Muslim elite without harming the narrow interest of this class. Even the few Muslim leaders who at one time saw the future of

India in Hindu-Muslim co-operation suddenly unearthed the fundamental and unbridgeable differences between the two communities.

The dramatic change in Sir Syed Ahmad's attitude and opinion is a clear illustration of this point. He had at one time said: "Remember that Hindus, Mussalmans are religious words; otherwise, Hindus, Mussalmans and even Christians who inhabit this country, all constitute one nation. Now the time is gone when only on account of differences in religion, the inhabitance of this country should be regarded as two different nations."[3] But such utterances of Sir Syed Ahmad do not reflect his genuine political beliefs. The news of the foundation of the All-India Congress and its claim that India was one nation did not please Sir Syed Ahmad. He wrote to Badruddin Tayabji: "I would object to any such Congress because the very basis of considering the whole of India to be one nation on which it is founded is wrong."[4] In an article contributed to the Pioneer of Allahabad in 1893 Sir Syed Ahmad further elaborated: "The aims and objects of the Indian National Congress are based upon ignorance of history and present-day realities; they do not take into consideration that India is inhabited by different nationalities: they propose that the Muslims like the Marathas, the Brahmins, the Madrasis, and the Peshawaris can all be treated alike and all of them belong to the same nation....For the successful running of a democratic government it is essential that the majorities should have the ability to govern not only themselves but also unwilling minorities...The Muslims are minority but they are highly united minority. At least traditionally they are prone to take sword in hand when the majority oppresses them."[5] Sir Syed Ahmad's stand was amply supported by the Muslim aristocrats of other provinces as well. Sir Ameer Ali's antipathy to the Congress was not less strong than that of Sir Syed Ahmad. Even Badruddin Tayabji agreed with Sir Syed that India was

3. Quoted in Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 48; also see Hussain, op. cit., pp. 24, 30.
4. Quoted in Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 66.
5. Quoted in Akhtar Usman: *Muslim India*, Lahore, 1941, p. 17.

not a nation. In his letter to Sir Syed Ahmad, dated February 18, 1888, he explained his position thus: "I am not aware of any one regarding the whole of India as one Nation and if you read my inaugural address, you will find it distinctly stated that there are numerous communities or nations in India which had peculiar problems of their own to solve, but there are some questions which touched all those communities and that it was for the discussion of these latter questions only that the Congress was assembled."[6] He argued, "We can no more stop the Congress than we can stop the progress of education. But it is in our power by firm and resolute action, to divert the course Congress shall take and my strong conviction is that the Mussalmans can by united action confine the Congress to such topics only as they may deem desirable or safe for discussion....My policy, therefore, would be to act from within rather than from without. I would say to all Mussalmans 'act with your Hindu fellow subjects in all matters in which you are agreed but oppose as strongly as you can if they bring forward any propositions that you may deem prejudicial to yourselves'."[7] But the major section of the Muslim elite were utterly unwilling to work from 'within' as suggested by Tayabji. In despair, Tayabji advised Hume to prorogue the Congress for five years, otherwise, he thought, political differences amongst the Muslim leaders would result in the disintegration of the Muslim community. He wrote to Hume in November 1888: "We are all of opinion that having regard to the distinctly hostile attitude of the Mohammedans, which is becoming daily more pronounced and more apparent, it is time for the friends, promoters and supporters of the Congress to reconsider their position and see whether under the present circumstances it is or not wise for us to continue holding Congress meeting every year.....The prime object of the Congress was to unite the different communities and provinces into one and thus promote harmony. As it is, however, not only have the Muhammedans been divided from the Hindus in a

6. *A Source Material for History of Freedom Movement in India* (Collected from Bombay Government Records). Bombay, 1958.
7. Ibid., p. 73.

manner they never were before but the Mohammedans themselves have been split into two factions, the gulf between them is becoming wider and wider every day. The Nizam and all principal men of the state such as Salar Jung, Munir-ul-Mulk, Fateh Nawaz Jung and above all Syed Hussain Bilgrami have joined the opposition led by Syed Ahmad, Ameer Ali and Abdul Latif. For the purpose of my present argument I assume that all these men are wrong and that we are in the right. Nevertheless, the fact exists and whether we like it or not, we must base our proceedings upon the fact that an overwhelming majority of Mohammedans is against the movement. Against this array it is useless saying that the intelligent and educated Muhammedans are in favour of the Congress. If then, the Mussalman community as a whole is against the Congress.....it follows that the movement *ipso facto* ceases to be general or National Congress... I observe increasing bitterness between Hindu and Mussalmans and I observe also that a difference of views among the Mohammedan leaders produces friction and bitterness which leads to extremely evil consequences. The *peculiar state of Muhammedan society renders it necessary that we should act together in all political matters but this friction comes in the way*..... (therefore) I *should like the Congress to be prorogued, say at least for five years.... If at the end of the 5 years our prospects improve we can renew our Congress, if not we can drop it with dignity*...."[8]

The Congress was neither prorogued nor dropped as advised by Tayabji. On the other hand, the renowned Muslim leaders instead of joining the Congress started political associations to nullify the claim of the Congress of being a national body. Besides propagating the cause of the Muslim community, these associations sometimes opposed the national demand for the introduction of representative institutions in India. In Bengal Sir Ameer Ali founded the Indian Muhammedan Association which aimed at "the political regeneration of the Indian Muhammedans by the moral revival and by constant endeavours to obtain from the Government a recognition of their just and

8. Ibid., pp. 81, 82.

reasonable claims."[9] In northern India Sir Syed Ahmad first tried to organize the Muslim feudal elements through the United Indian Patriotic Association and later through Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association. The objects of the latter association were: "1. to promote the political interests of the Muhammedans by representing their views before the English people and the Indian Government; 2. to discuss popular and political agitation among the Muhammedans; 3. to lend support to measures calculated to increase the stability of the British Government and security of the empire; 4. to strive to preserve peace in India and to encourage sentiments of loyalty in the population."[10]

In 1896 the members of the Anglo-Oriental Defence Association brought forward a memorandum for securing proper representation of the Muslims in the legislative councils, municipal boards and district boards etc. The memorandum demanded:

(a) Equal representation of the Muslims and the Hindus in the North-West Provinces Legislative Council because, on account of their past historical role, the political importance of the Muslims was not inferior to that of the Hindus, although the latter constituted a vast majority of the population.

(b) Separate Muslim electorate, with Muslims voting for the Muslims only.

(c) Weightage in representation for the Muslims on the municipal councils, district boards etc.[11]

The separatist stand of the upper-class Muslims during the 19th century was elaborated in 1906. The arguments used to support this philosophy by Sir Syed Ahmad and others in the 19th century remained valid and were used repeatedly by the leaders of the Muslim League.

Sir Syed Ahmad justified his unabashed loyalty to the British Government on the ground that his community was economically backward and needed protection from the govern-

9. Ram Gopal, op. cit., p. 50.
10. *M.A.O. College Magazine*, January 1895, pp. 24, 25; A. I. G., April 6, 1894.
11. *M.A.O. College Magazine*, December 1896, p. 515.

ment without whose support it could never hope to advance.[12] Sir Syed Ahmad ignored the general poverty of the Indian masses, Muslim as well as Hindu. In fact, the lot of the Hindu peasants was in no way different from that of their Muslim counterpart. Why did then Sir Syed Ahmad deem it necessary to distinguish between the economic suffering of the masses in terms of religion and community? Perhaps Muslim leaders like Sir Syed Ahmad were not concerned with the masses at all. What they were really concerned about was the growing impoverishment of the upper-class Muslims. Describing the pitiable condition of the Indian Muslims in his "A Cry from Indian Muhammedan" (1882) Sir Ameer Ali wrote: "The waves of adversity, which have one after another passed over the Muhammedans of India, have left the great majority of the leading families stranded, and a large portion completely wrecked.... The destruction of the Muhammedan aristocracy has proved as injurious to the interest of the community as to those of State."[13] He asked the question, "Was it necessary to deprive them (Muslim aristocrats) of influence and wealth and reduce them to their present impoverished and subordinate condition? Was it necessary to ruin them by taking away their land and giving them to their Hindu bailiffs."[14] To comprehend fully the tragedy of the Muslim case, Sir Ameer Ali wanted his readers to keep in mind that a "race of conquerors, who not more than a hundred years ago possessed a monopoly of power and wealth" could not better their lives by entering the world of trade and commerce.[15] They did not possess the

12. Hunter's book which became the Bible for Muslim politicians in this regard was based solely on the study of East Bengal. Its conclusion did not hold true for the Muslims belonging to other parts of India. Statistical data recently provided by Paul Brass on the Muslims of United Provinces throws enough light on the real extent of Muslim poverty. See article of Paul Brass in *Economic and Political Weekly*, Annual Number, 1970.
13. Aziz, K.K. (ed.): *Ameer Ali : His Life and Works*, Lahore, 1968, p. 48.
14. Ibid., pp. 44, 45, see also Ameer Ali's article: *"The Life Problem in Bengal*, pp. 211, 212.
15. Aziz, K. K., op. cit., pp. 44, 59.

necessary disposition and training for engaging in profit-making activities. The upper-class Muslims would have somehow borne their injury, but the added insult of their "old Hindu bailiff" becoming landlord or magistrate was beyond toleration. Meer Iraj Ali's son (a *taluqdar* of Dacca) told Bishop Heber that his father was "not in the habit of asking favours from the government, but it was a shame that the Baboos of Calcutta should obtain badges of nobility, while real Syads, descendants of the Prophet, whose ancestors had never known what trade was, but had won with their swords from the idolators, the land for which they now paid taxes to the Company, should not be overlooked...."[16]

In his paper "The Cause of the Backwardness of the Muhammedans" presented at the 13th Educational Conference in 1899, Abdul Wali showed immense concern for the ruined gentry of Bengal. His discussion on the Mohammedan backwardness was completely restricted to the upper-class Muslims; the condition of the poor Muslim cultivators and ruined weavers did not attract his attention. He said: "....the Muhammedan gentry of Bengal, as a distinct class, revered and venerated for their blue blood, higher culture, love of learning and religion, benevolent disposition...and sincerity, have well-nigh disappeared, and with them their mode of dress, speaking and interchange of courtesies and dealings with others. In this respect the Bengal Muhammedans of the day, unlike their co-religionists in other parts of the Indian Empire, are at a great disadvantage. By tradition, by heredity, and perhaps on account of long residence in the pestilential climate of Bengal, the scions of Mohammedan Ashrafs (descendants of the foreigners) were ill-prepared for the altered policy of the Government as also for agriculture and commercial pursuits, for which they had no aptitude or means."[17]

In fact, however, the new circumstances had not completely obliterated job opportunities for the upper-class Muslims. It is seldom remembered that the order of the Government allow-

16. Heber: *Narration of a Journey through Upper Provinces of India etc.* 1827, Place? Vol. I. p. 205, also Vol. II. p. 120.
17. Jafri, Syed Rais Ahmad (ed): *Rare Documents*, Lahore, 1967, p. 243.

ing the candidates for munsifships and pleaders to use Urdu or English in their examination had remained in force as late as 1864. Sir Ameer Ali himself acknowledged that throughout the period from 1812 to 1838 (after the creation of the Sadar Diwani Adalat) "the Mussalmans enjoyed the largest share of government patronage."[18] However, thanks to the machinations of the British Administrators, the deliberate identification of the economic ruin of the upper-class Muslims in certain regions with that of the entire community in India provided a rallying point for the imperialists and the "loyalists" to join their forces against the "clamouring of the Congress-wallahs".

Even in the sphere of education, except in Bengal, the Muslims were ahead or at least equal to the Hindus at the primary and secondary stages. The data on Muslim education submitted by the governments of British provinces to the Government of India in 1871 makes this amply clear. In the north-western provinces where the Muslims constituted less than 14 per cent of the population, the number of pupils in 1871 was as follows:[19]

	Muslims	*Hindus*
Government Schools	81	1,012
Government District Schools	448	2,438
Government Tehsil Schools	1,937	7,129
Government Halka Schools	15,603	85,356
Aided Schools	2,688	8,771
Unaided Schools	17,364	36,367

In Bombay, excluding Sind, where the Muslims were in the ratio of 1 to 12 in the population, 1 out of 10 boys at the school was a Muslim. The Director of Public Instruction was emphatic in stating that "it cannot be said generally that the Muhammedans are backward in education."[20] The report submitted by the Government of Punjab stated: "the Mohammedans in no degree stand aloof from active co-operation with

18. Aziz, K. K., op. cit., p. 63.
19. *Report on the General Instruction in the North-West Provinces*, Home Education Proceedings, September 1973, No. 48.
20. Home Education Proceedings, No. 79,

our educational system."[21] The Chief Commissioner of C. P. wrote that although the Muslims were only 2.5 per cent of the population, they number 4,768 out of a total 83,536 in various schools and colleges (i.e. about 5.5 per cent).[22] The General Report of Public Instruction in the north-western provinces for 1885-86 shows that Muslims out-numbered the Hindus.[23]

	Number of pupils		*Pupils per* 10,000	
	Muslims	*Hindus*	*Muslims*	*Hindus*
University Stage	140	964	3.04	3.14
Secondary Stage	13,555	46,109	298,00	154,00
Primary Stage	29,428	162,374	650,00	543,00
Private Institutions	23,300	47,794	515,00	158,00

Members of the Muslim upper class abstained from joining the Congress because it had included representation by election and open competition for government services as essential parts of its programme. Any political programme based on these two principles could not be acceptable to the upper-class Muslims. An open competition whether for jobs or for legislative bodies could undermine the position of the upper-class Muslims in two ways. First, by giving a chance to the low-class educated Muslims to upgrade themselves economically and socially it could produce a strong rival group within the community to challenge the upper-class leadership. Secondly, it could involve them in direct competition with the educated Hindu middle classes for entry into the government services.[23a] Nomination of Muslims to reserved seats in the government services was seen as the only way to save the privileged position of the upper-class Muslims and this was justified on the grounds of their minority, religion and status. In the name of the religion, they were, however, merely consolidating their own class interests. In order to survive in the new poli-

21. Ibid., No. 95.
22. Ibid., No. 101.
23. *General Report on the Public Instruction in the North-West Provinces for 1885-86*, Allahabad, 1886.
23a. See Sir Syed Ahmad's Lucknow speech of 1887 in his *Present State of Indian Politics*, Allahabad, 1888, pp. 7 to 21.

tical environment, the upper-class Muslims were forced to invent a new ideology that could have wider emotional appeal to all classes of the Muslim community than the old slogans of race and lineage. Cultural exclusiveness and power monopoly practised in the past were now replaced by the principle of political separatism in the name of the whole community. The transition from cultural exclusiveness to political separatism did not involve any structural change in the social organization of the Muslim community. The old social equilibrium continued undisturbed.

Even in non-political matters, the upper-class Muslims acted according to their class interests. The Educational Conference founded by Sir Syed Ahmad in 1886 was at the same time an assembly of the aristocrats and the leaders of the Muslim community. An analysis of the members of the conference in various sessions leads one to the conclusion that the largest number belonged to the class which was styled as Raes and Nawabs. Next in number, though first in importance from the point of view of the conduct of business, was the class of lawyers and barristers-at-law. It was frequently announced from the chair that the Conference was an assembly of the guides and leaders of the Muhammedan community. Mohsin-ul-Mulk even challenged the critics of the Conference to point out if there was any other Muslim organization where the "elite of the community met once a year."[24]

What stands out most prominently in the emergence and growth of Muslim communalism is that the leadership of the community continued to remain in the hands of those people whose ideals and outlook belonged to a bygone age. New education did not infuse them with any radical social or political attitudes. Sir Syed Ahmad and his followers who are given credit for modernizing the Muslim community by advocating Western education were least modernized themselves. Sir Syed Ahmad had prayed to the British Government that it should nominate only the upper-class Muslims on the ground that:

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24. Jain, M. S.: *The Aligarh Movement,* Agra 1965, pp. 74-75. *Report of the Muslim Educational Conference,* 1886, p. 120; also Report of 1889, p. 69.

"You will see that it is one of the necessary conditions of sitting at the same table with the Viceroy, that the person concerned should have a high social status in the country. Will the members of the noble families in our country like it that a person of lower class or lower status, even if he has taken a B.A. or M.A. degree and possesses the necessary ability, should govern them and dispose of their wealth, property and honour...."[25] The modernization of the Muslim community as heralded by Sir Syed Ahmad was not the modernization of the whole community, but the superficial modernization of the upper-class Muslims. The modernization introduced in this manner was not aimed at creating an intellectual or social revolution. Its sole aim was preservation of the old order. The pattern of education conceived by the 19th century Muslim elite was more like an orientation course in self-defence which taught them western methods to defend their old status and privileges. By making religious instruction compulsory in the schools and colleges founded by them, the Muslim leaders minimized the significance of modern elements in the education imparted to the Muslim youth. As we have stated earlier, it was in the interest of the upper-class Muslims to continue with the static social structure of their community. The educated aristocrats, therefore, were bound to keep the Muslim community socially backward and politically separate to ensure their domination.

It was not an accident that the centres of Muslim communalism developed in areas where a large number of Muslim landlords and *taluqdars* had escaped the hands of British annexationists, e.g. East Bengal, United Provinces, North-Western Provinces, Hyderabad etc. Furthermore, Sir Syed Ahmad, Sir Ameer Ali and other equally renowned Muslim reformers kept the venue of their activities confined to the cities and directed their appeal only to one section of the community. The idioms they used were not meant for mass consumption; they could be understood only by one class—the educated aristocrats. As late as the twenties almost all educated Muslims came from the class of *zamindars, taluqdars,* or those established

25. Sir Syed Ahmad, op. cit., p. 4.

families which, though economically impoverished, still occupied the top position in the social hierarchy of the community.[26]

The political importance of the upper-class Muslims was correctly understood by the British Government. To quote only one example, Sir John Strachey had informed his Government that "....the better classes of Muhammedans are a source to us of strength and not of weakness. They constitute a comparatively small but energetic minority of the population, whose political interests are identical with ours."[27] The British administrators knew that by reconciling this "energetic minority" they would be able to win the whole Muslim community to their side and could thus isolate the nationalists. Through the methods of "reservations" and "nominations", they deliberately allowed the upper-class Muslims to appropriate to themselves all available politico-economic opportunities which were in fact granted to the entire Muslim community. The policy of the Government to pamper the upper-class Muslims was not restricted to any particular sphere. Showing special consideration for their sentiments, the British Recruiting Officers were specifically instructed not to recruit any low-caste Muslims except as menials. They were not to be placed alongside the "original Muslims" (the Ashrafs) because no "good Muslim" would ever agree to rub shoulders with them. Muslims belonging to the category of the Ashrafs, on the other hand, could be recruited directly to the ranks of officers. Special handbooks were prepared regionwise listing the various Muslim groups with their characteristic features to enable the British Recruiting Officers to distinguish the low-caste Muslims from the others.[28]

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26. *A.I.G.*, October 10, 1873; April 13, 1878; April 2, 1881; *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I, p. 34. Although the total population of the Muslims in Oudh was only 13.4 per cent in 1886 but they held 45 per cent of the total posts in the judicial and executive service of the North-West Frontier Provinces and Oudh. Hindus held 52.2 per cent posts though they formed 86.2 per cent of the population. Misra, B.B., op. cit., p. 388.
27. Quoted in Smith, W.C., also Ahmad Qayum: *Wahabi Movement* in India, 1967, pp. 142, 154.
28. Bourne, op. cit., pp. 33 to 36, 42, 47, 53, 58.

The alliance forged by Sir Syed Ahmad between the British Government and the Muslim upper classes endured till the end of British rule in India. It was an unholy alliance between minority communalism and alien imperialism against Indian nationalism. Both the Muslim elite and the British Government were eager to safeguard their vested interests endangered by the rising tide of Indian nationalism. Anti-Congress tirades of the British imperialists were similar in content and tone to those of the Muslim League leaders. Both accused the Congress of being a Hindu organization and the nationalist leaders of being petty politicians. The alliance between the British imperialists and Muslim communalists in India was based on the principle of mutual benefit. It wou'd be wrong, therefore, to put the entire blame on the British Government for using the Muslims as a counter-poise to the Congress. If the British Government bribed the Muslims to keep away from the "seditious nationalists", the Muslim leaders black-mailed both the imperialists and the nationalists to build up their political strength. The alliance between the British imperialists and the Muslim communalists continued up to 1940, when a formal demand for Pakistan was made by the Muslim League. By then, the League was on its own legs and did not need the support of the British Government to sutstain itself.

In the revolutionary climate of the first decade of the 20th century when democratic ideals started gaining greater currency and support, the Muslim elite thought it wise to adopt constitutional methods to perpetuate their traditional status. Constitutional reforms on democratic lines contemplated by the Government to mollify the Indian sentiment after the regime of Lord Curzon caused serious concern to the Muslim leaders. A deputation of prominent Muslims led by the Aga Khan met the Viceroy at Simla on 1 October 1906, and demanded definite constitutional safeguards to protect the exclusive interests of Muslim minority. One of the most important safeguards suggested by the deputationists was a separate Muslim representation in all the elected bodies, from municipal boards to the Imperial Legislative Council. The address presented to the Viceroy stated: "It is true that we have many and important interests in common with our Hindu fellow-countrymen, and it will

always be a matter of the utmost satisfaction to us to see these interests safeguarded by the presence, in our Legis'ative Chambers, of able supporters of these interests irrespective of their nationality. Still it cannot be denied that we Muhammedans are a distinct community with additional interests of our own, which are not shared by other communities, and have hitherto suffered from the fact that they have not been adequately represented."[29] They also urged that "the position accorded to the Muhammedan community in any kind of representation, direct or indirect, and in all other ways, affecting their status and influence, should be commensurate not merely with their numerical strength, but also with their political importance, and the value of the contribution which they make to the defence of the Empire....and....the position they occupied in India a little more than a hundred years ago, and of which the traditions have naturally not faded from their minds."[30] Referring to the local bodies it was pointed out: "As Municipal and District Boards have to deal with important local interests, affecting to a great extent the hea'th, comfort, educational needs, and even the religious concerns of the inhabitants....these institutions form, as it were, the initial rungs in the ladder of self-government, and it is here that the principle of representation is brought home intimately to the intelligence of the people. Yet the position of the Muhammedans on these Boards is not at present regulated by any guiding principle capable of general application, and practice varies in different localities.....we would, therefore, respectfully suggest that local authority should, in every case, be required to declare the number of Hindus and Muhammedans entitled to seats on Municipal and District Boards, such proportion to be determined in accordance with the numerical strength, social status, local influence, and special requirements of either community."[31] With regard to the Muslim representation in the Imperial Legislative Council it was suggested: 1. "That, in the Cadre of the Council, the proportion of Muhammedan representatives should not be

29. *The Pioneer*, October 5, 1906.
30. Idem.
31. Idem.

determined on the basis of the numerical strength of the community, and that, in any case, the Muhammedan representatives should never be an ineffective minority."[32]

2. "That, as far as possible, appointment by election should be given preference over nomination."[33]

3. "That, for the purpose of choosing Muhammedan members, Muhammedan landowners, lawyers, merchants, and representatives of other interests of a status to be subsequently determined by Your Excellency's Government, Muhammedan members of the Provincial Councils and Muhammedan fellows of Universities should be invested with electoral powers to be excercised in accordance with such procedure as may be prescribed by Your Excellency's Government in that behalf."[34]

The Deputationists emphasized that "the political importance of a community to a certain extent gains strength or suffers detriment, according to the position that the members of that community occupy in the service of the State. If, as is unfortunately the case with the Muhammedans, they are not adequately represented in this manner, they lose the prestige and the influence which are justly their due. We, therefore, pray that Government will be graciously pleased to provide that, both in the gazetted and subordinate ministerial services of all Indian provinces, a due proportion of the Muhammedans shall always find place."[35]

Alongside separate electorate and due share in the Government service, the demands for the establishment of a separate Muslim University was also made. The Muslim leaders were convinced that their "aspirations as a community" and their "future progress" required an independent educational centre where their "religious and intellectual life"[36] could flourish. In a carefully worded passage the Government was warned that unless some serious effort was made to mitigate the Muslim grievances, the situation would go out of hand. It said: "The

32. Idem.
33. Idem.
34. Idem.
35. Idem.
36. Idem.

Muhammedans of India have always placed implicit reliance on the sense of justice and fair dealing that have characterised their rulers, and have, in consequence, abstained from pressing their claims by methods that might prove at all embarassing; but earnestly as we desire that the Muhammedans of India should not in the future depart from that excellent and time-honoured tradition, recent events have stirred up feelings, especially among the younger generation of Muhammedans, which might in certain circumstances and under certain contingencies, easily pass beyond the control of temperate and sober guidance."[37]

Whether the Simla Deputation which claimed special privileges for the Muslims on the grounds of "political importance of their community" and the unique position it held before the British conquest, was a "command performance" manoeuvred by the British officials, or a result of independent thinking, is not a very important issue. What is beyond doubt is the fact that the prominent Muslims of India were deliberately playing a game which militated against democratic processes and also the larger interests of their country. The democratization of power to which the Indian nationalist movement was ideologically committed could not be appreciated by the Muslim elite. Their demand for separate electorate in 1906 was aimed at sabotaging the democratic ideals inherent in the principle of election. The chances of an ordinary Muslim entering the Legislative Council became remote since the Muslim members to the provincial councils were to be chosen through special electoral colleges composed of Muslim "landowners, lawyers, merchants, and other important interests" like the university graduates and the members of district and municipal boards.

The favourable reply given by Lord Minto to the Muslim Deputation was a foregone conclusion. Rise of extremism in Indian politics had un-nerved the Government. It was in urgent need of a counter-poise for checking the "seditious" activities of the nationalists. The Government could check the rising tide of the Indian national movement by accentuating the political differences between the two communities. Lord

37. Idem.

Minto was, therefore, very willing to grant a few concessions to one section of the Indian population, namely, the Muslims, if this could thwart the attempts of the Indian National Congress to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity in the name of Indian nationalism. The day the Aga Khan met the Viceroy, Lady Minto wrote the following in her journal: "This has been a very eventful day: as some one said to me, 'an epoch in Indian history'. We are aware of the feeling of unrest that exists throughout India, and the dissatisfaction that prevails amongst the people of all classes and creeds. The Muhammedan population which numbers 63 millions, who have always been intensely loyal, resent not having proper representation and consider themselves slighted in many ways, preference having been given to the Hindus. The agitators have been most anxious to foster this feeling and have naturally done their utmost to secure the co-operation of this vast community. The younger generation were wavering, inclined to throw their lot with advanced agitators of the Congress, and a howl went up that the loyal Muhammedans were not to be supported, and the agitators were to obtain their demands through agitation."[38] The British Government was anxious to save these "loyal Muhammedans" from being discredited in the eyes of Muslim young generation. It did succeed in its mission as is evident from Lady Minto's description of that "eventful day". She wrote: "This evening I have received the following letter from an official: 'I must send Your Excellency a line to say that a very very big thing has happened today. A work of statemanship that will affect India and Indian history for many a long year. It is nothing less than the pulling back of 62 millions of people from joining the ranks of seditious opposition."[39]

Without minimizing the political significance of the Simla Deputation it must be added here that the claim made by the British officer of isolating "62 million Muhammedans" from the mainstream of Indian politics is highly exaggerated. The Simla Deputation did not give birth to Muslim separatism. It merely provided a constitutional basis to the well-established

38. Minto, Mary: *India, Minto and Morley*, London, 1934, p. 56.
39. Ibid., p. 47.

policy assiduously followed for more than two decades by both the British Government and the Muslim elite. It was wrongly assumed by the British that by conceding to the Muslim demand of separate electorate they had won permanent allies against Indian nationalism. The so-called loyal Muhammedans did not mind taking recourse to agitational politics or befriending the Congress. However, it was the first occasion when the goals of the separatist Muslim politics were defined in clear terms: preservation of the separate political identity of the Muslim community and its elevation to the status it enjoyed in the past. The Muslim leaders had appealed to Lord Minto not merely to get their community recognized as a distinct minority, but had sought his help in transforming minority into an "effective minority" *vis-a-vis* the majority. The future struggle of the Muslim leaders was solely concentrated on this point. Every new concession they won only increased their dissatisfaction; the Hindu majority always remained more effective than them. Even fifty per cent of the power conceded to them in 1942 was felt inadequate in making them effective unless accompanied by the right to secede.

Once the Muslim leaders had become confident that their demand for separate electorate would not go unheard, they hastened to create a formal political organization exclusively representative of the Indian Muslims. The signatories of the Simla Deputation became the founder members of the All-India Muslim League. Sir Syed Ali Imam, its first president, talked of the historical separateness of the Muslims in terms of "nationality, character and creed". He held the Indian National Congress responsible for the birth of an independent all-India Muslim political organization. It was pointed out that the Muslim attitude towards the Congress rested on the grounds "clearly stated in the memorable Lucknow speech of Sir Syed Ahmad 21 years ago."[40] If the Congress leaders wanted the political co-operation of the Muslims then "let the Indian National Congress shake itself free from the baneful blandishments of 'self-governing member of the British Empire', and let it announce that in our practical politics loyalty to the Bri-

40. *The Tribune*, January 3, 1908.

tish administration of the country is loyalty to India..... As long as the leaders of the Indian National Congress will not give us a workable policy like the one indicated above so long the All-India Muslim League has a sacred duty to perform. That duty is to save the community it represents and especially the youth of that community from the political error of joining an organization that in the main, as put by Lord Morley, cries for the moon."[41] A year later, addressing a conference of Bihar Muslims, Sir Imam retaliated to the Congress propaganda against separate electorate by showing the fallacy in the arguments of "integratists." "He (the non-separatist) forgets that the Muhammedans of India are a distinct community with distinct religious, social and racial characteristics of their own, and that a country like India that is only an infant in matters of representative institutions, unfortunately election is too often subordinated to communal consideration rather than to political discrimination of the merits and demerits of the individual candidates, I hold the view that without reservation of just and adequate number of seats for the Mussalmans in the Councils, full and adequate on the grounds of numerical strength and political importance, the reforms will result in deep dissatisfaction among the Muhammedans. Political readjustment of the relations of the two communities alone can save them from the perils of years and years, possibly of generations, of bitterly suicidal strife that the present outlook too palpably foreshadows."[42]

It was emphasized again and again that without a definite political readjustment, the introduction of democracy and cooperation with the Congress would throw the Muslims in permanent political oblivion. After Mr. Gokhale's address to the students of Aligarh University, Nawab Viqar-ul-Mulk got up to explain why the Muslims had adopted a separatist stand. He told the young Muslims present there :

"To my mind it appears that Congress has already chalked out its future programme, those ordeals which it had performed, and it is slowly proceeding point by point on the lines of that

41. Idem.
42. Ibid., May 7, 1909.

programme....they want to consolidate their political stand day by day, to achieve representative government by virtue of their organized strength. They have established this order from the lowest Municipal Board to Viceroy's Council and this way they want to have a representative government, where the voice of the country may be in their hands.... And then the pioneers of this great movement very meekly tell a Mussalman that all their scheme is towards the advancement and betterment of the country... Why then not should the Mussalmans appreciate their sincerity and spirit of mutual regard and join their voice with ours for a noble cause and strengthen our cry? But oh, the Muslim youth of India, it is all a mirage, a policy of destruction for our community.... Our culture and civilization shall go to dust, our objectives shall be lost in the air."[43] Elections would bring the "domination of the majority over the minority, one the ruler and other the ruled."[44]

Annulment of the partition of Bengal in 1911, controversy over the Kanpur mosque and the proposed Aligarh University coupled with the British involvement in the war against Turkey gave a new turn to Muslim politics. Loyalty to the Government as the professed creed of the Muslim community was abandoned. The Muslim leaders decided to co-operate with the Congress provided it recognized separate political status of their community and was willing to concede a definite share of power in the new reforms scheme to be introduced in the foreseeable future by the Government. The Congress leaders accepted these conditions and arrived at an agreement with the League in 1916 when they accepted separate electorate for the Muslims and allowed them representation much in excess of their numbers in the provinces except Bengal and Punjab. It further provided that no bill or any clause thereof nor any resolution introduced by a non-official member affecting one or the other community in the Legislative Council concerned shall be "proceeded with if three-fourths of the members of the community in the particular Council, Imperial or Provincial,

43. See Aziz, K. K.: *Britain and Muslim India*, London, 1963, p. Hamid: *Muslim Separatism*, London, 1967, p.

44. Idem.

opposed the Bill, any clause thereof, or the Resolution."[45] The distribution of seats for Muslims worked out under the agreement was as follows:[46]

Punjab	50 per cent of the elected members
United Provinces	30 „ „ „ „
Bengal	40 „ „ „ „
Bihar	25 „ „ „ „
Central Provinces	15 „ „ „ „
Madras	15 „ „ „ „
Bombay	33⅓ „ „ „ „

The cordial political relations between the Congress and the Muslim League established by the Lucknow Pact reached its highest watermark during the Non-co-operation and the Khilafat movements in 1921. But the withdrawal of the Non-co-operation Movement was soon followed by communal strifes and political bickerings when Muslim politics reverted to the course chalked out by Sir Syed Ahmad and Ameer Ali. The reasons for the failure of the Congress-League entente established by Gandhi will be discussed in the next chapter. However, we would like to point out here that although the Muslim leaders had participated in the Non-co-operation Movement, they did not share the ideals of nationalism as propagated by the Congress. The freedom of India was not the ultimate goal of their struggle; it was merely an endeavour towards the defence of the Pan-Islamic empire in the world.[47] Mohammad Ali joined hands with the Congress because all other avenues had failed to save the integrity of the Turkish Empire, the Muslim Khilafat. Addressing the Congress delegates in 1923, he said: "If you carefully examine the history of the last dozen years (you) will come to know how our disasters in foreign affairs have thrown us back on you. We feel grateful for the concentration of the Mussalmans on foreign affairs

45. Keith, A.B.: *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, London, 1923, pp. 124, 27.

46. Ibid., p. 126.

47. Azad, Abul Kalam: *Masleh-i-Khilafat aur Jazirat ul-Arab*, Calcutta, pp. 41, 174, 184; Mohammad Ali's speech in *The Tribune*, December 28, 1922.

outside the confines because it has made us realize that we must after all come to Indians for the proper solution of our difficulties abroad."[48] Earlier Mohammad Ali had advised the Muslims that "....retention of communal individuality should be their supreme, and vital aim. This alone is the ideal worth striving for....Nationalism, faith in some great political doctrines, even lofty aspiration to achieve the federation of the world, are lesser loyalties." He was even proud to state that "Turkey is almost as much or as little the Fatherland of Indian Mussalmans as of the Turks themselves."[49] For "the sympathies of a Mussalman are co-extensive with his religion."[50]

The slogan of 'Hindu-Muslim Bhai' raised during the Khilafat agitation did not symbolise the political oneness of the Indian people. The fact that the Hindus were non-Muslims always remained fresh in the minds of the Khilafat leaders. Those who had given a call for the international solidarity of the Muslims could not accommodate the Hindus in their scheme of thinking. The brotherly relations of the Muslims with Hindus during these years rested on the most fragile foundation. If such relations interfered with the realization of the Muslim communal interests and their international obligations, they could be dropped without any ceremony. The so-called brothers, the Hindus, were in fact mere allies whose support had become indispensable for the *Jehad* against the British Government. Quoting the Quranic verse (LX: 8-9) "God forbids you not, as regards those who have not fought on account of religion, nor expelled you from your homes, that ye make friends of them. God forbids you only those who warred against you on account of religion and have driven you out from your homes and helped to drive you out, that ye make friends of them. Whosoever takes them for friends, they are evil doers."[51] Azad built up the theory that since the Hindus had not acted as their enemies, even though they are non-Muslims, friendship with them was legitimate according to the Shariat. To

48. Presidential Speeches, Madras, 1934, pp. 626.
49. *Comrade*, January 2, 1914.
50. Ibid., January 14, 1911 April 12, 1919 February 18, 1911.
51. Azad. op. cit., p. 298; *Khutbat-i-Azad*, pp. 42, 44.

support this he also referred to the treaty the Prophet had concluded with the non-Muslims at Madina in 622 A.D.[52]

The Muslim opposition to the British authority in India during the Khilafat movement did not indicate the birth of any new political consciousness similar to that witnessed amongst the subject people of the Afro-Asian countries under the European domination. Nor did the Indian Muslims detract from their earlier attitude of loyalty to the British Government. The British right to rule over India *per se* was not questioned by them.[53] Non-fulfilment of various pledges made by the Government to the Muslims was the sole cause of estrangement between the two allies. They took recourse to agitational politics merely to impress upon the Government that the support of the Muslims could not be taken for granted. Mohammad Ali wrote: "Our attitude towards the Government established in this country must be guided only by one consideration—the attitude of the Government towards ourselves."[54] In other words, it was made clear that the Muslim co-operation henceforth would depend upon the willingness of the British Government to support the Muslim cause. The Muslim leaders were grieved that the British Government had ignored their petition and prayers and had allowed the dismemberment of the Turkish empire; in other words, the Khilafat.

52. Ibid.
53. *Comrade*, October 14, 1911.
54. Afzal, Iqbal (ed), *Select Speeches and Writings of Maulana Mohammad Ali*, Lahore, 1963. p. 213.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GROWTH OF MUSLIM COMMUNALISM : FROM MINORITY RIGHTS TO SEPARATE NATIONHOOD

In politics, reconciliation of contradictory forces produces a situation which is always artificial and short lived. Sooner or later the inner contradictions inevitably reassert themselves with new vigour. The Congress support to the Khilafat movement did not succeed in negating the contradiction between nationalism and Muslim communalism. The Muslim protogonists of the Khilafat had struck an alliance with the Congress without modifying their ideology; such an alliance could hardly check Muslim separatism in Indian politics. The Khilafat propaganda did not result in the growth of any new sense of nationalism amongst the Muslims. On the contrary, it only heightened the sense of Muslim identity which proved a great psychological asset for the Muslim leaders in popularising their separatist ideology.

It may be stated here that Gandhi, with all his wisdom and insight, had failed to see the communal problem in its correct perspective. The spectacle of Hindu-Muslim unity during the Khilafat movement made him believe that the solution of the communal problem had been found at last. But the eruption of communal violence in different parts of India in the twenties left him bewildered. He tried to salvage the ruins of his "grand alliance" through unity conferences and fast. But soon the day came when he was forced to realize that the chant of "Hindu Mussalman ki Jai" which had drawn crowds on the platform of the Congress was ineffective in restraining the blind fanaticism of the misguided masses. His efforts to restore communal peace left him exhausted without improving the situation in any appreciable degree. He had to admit publicly that he was "found wanting as a physician prescribing a cure for this malady."[1] Addressing a public

1. Tendulkar, D.G. *Mahatma*, New Delhi, 1961. Vol. II, p. 183.

meeting at Culcutta in May 1925 he said:"....some day or other, we Hindu and Muslims have to come together, if we want the deliverance of our country. And if it is to be our lot that before we can come together we must shed one another's blood, then I say sooner we do so the better it is for us."[2] Gandhi looked upon the communal conflict as only an overt expression of religious antagonism. He, therefore, stressed the oneness of all religions and preached tolerance to both Hindu and Muslims for each other's religious sentiments. Gandhi believed that this would ease communal tension and create the necessary harmony and unity between the two communities for the national cause. But all such efforts were futile since the real cause of communal conflict was the struggle for power, and not religious antagonism.

The 1920's witnessed increased incidence of communal violence which was a direct result of political tension. Its root cause lay in the Act of 1919. That Act opened up fresh avenues of employment and offices, and led to a scramble between the educated classes of the two communities for a bigger share in the "loaves and fishes" available. In provinces where Hindus or Muslims constituted a sizeable minority, one community started accusing the other of monopolising power through manipulation and intrigue with the Government officials. In his evidence before the Reforms Enquiry Committee of 1924 Barkat Ali endorsed Sir Shafi's view that the "acute phase of communal feeling" existed "mainly in the bigger towns (of Punjab) between the educated section of the two communities who were dependent on service for their maintenance."[3] Shafaat Ali Khan, the member of United Provinces Legislative Council, also traced the source of growing communal tension in his province to the introduction of the Act of 1919. He said: "We are free to acknowledge that the Reforms have by bringing India face to face with the problem of self-government precipitated the struggle for power and emoluments of office, and, in fact, for control

2. Idem.

3. *Appendix No. 6 to the Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee*, (Oral Evidence), Simla, 1924, Vol. I, p. 411.

of the entire machinery of the government."[4] Communal violence was the extension of political conflict. Political groups which were using religion for obtaining political power were not interested in national unity or peace. Overtly or covertly these groups encouraged communal violence by every possible means. Exaggerated accounts of the riots were given out by the communally oriented newspapers which kept communal bitterness and hatred alive. Whenever the demand for transfer of power from the British to Indian hands gained momentum, and whenever the possibility of a compromise between the two communities was in sight, there were ugly outbursts of communal violence. The Congress-League Pact of 1916 was followed by such riots in 1917-18. The unprecedented unity of purpose and action exhibited during the Non-co-operation Movement was marred by the communal violence at Kohat, Saharnpur etc. With the assurance of the British Government to introduce gradually full responsible government in India started the second crucial phase of Muslim politics. From the last quarter of the 19th century up to the first decade of the 20th century the struggle of the Muslim elite was directed towards getting their community recognized as a separate political entity with a view not only to secure their economic interests but also to legitimatize their position as the spokesmen of the Muslim community in their dealings with the government as well as with the Indian nationalists. The grant of separate electorate with weightage in 1909 had turned Muslims into a special class amongst the Indian subjects of the British Government. Consequently, the nationalist leaders were compelled to accept the Muslims as a separate class, for their refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of a separate Muslim leadership had now become meaningless. Negotiations started by the Congress in 1913 culminated in the Lucknow Pact which recognized the Muslim demand for separate electorate. This was a virtual acceptance of the Muslim claim that their interests were not necessarily concurrent with the national interests for which the Congress was working as a national organization. The aim

4. *Indian Statutory Committee's Report*, Vol. II, Part I, Calcutta, 1930, p. 273.

of the Muslim elite after 1921 was to make the Muslim minority politically effective in national life. Although it could not be as effective as the Hindus, they had wanted it to be powerful enough to resist the Hindu domination and preserve its distinct identity. Neither at the centre nor in the provinces were the Muslims to stand in subservience to the Hindu majority. This target of making the Muslim Communities "effective" implied the scrapping of the Lucknow Pact and formulation of fresh demands. However, the denotation of "effectiveness" kept on changing from year to year, and each change led to an increase in the number of Muslim demands.

In its general session held at Lahore in May 1924, the All-India Muslim League laid down principles which had to be incorporated in any future constitution of India acceptable to the Muslims. Resolution No. 11 of the League stated: "All-India Muslim League hereby resolves, that in any future scheme of a constitution for India that may ultimately be agreed upon and accepted by the people, the following shall constitute its basic fundamental principles:

a. The existing provinces of India shall be united under a common Government on a federal basis so that each province shall have full and complete provincial autonomy, the functions of the Central Government being confined to such matters only as are of general and common concern.

b. Any territorial redistribution that might at any time become necessary, shall not in any way affect the Muslim majority of population in the Punjab, Bengal and North-West Frontier Province.

c. Full religious liberty, i. e. liberty of belief, worship, observances, propaganda, association, and education shall be guaranteed to all communities."[5] The resolution also added that no bill could be passed if $\frac{3}{4}$ of members of any community opposed it.

In the common opinion of the Muslim leaders the viability of the Indian democracy and communal peace depended on mutual security. The Muslims being in minority could never

5. *Appendix No. 5 to the Report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee*, Calcutta, 1924, p. 376; *The Tribune*, May 27, 1924.

feel secure unless they acquired effective representation in every province and their share in the government service was sufficient to allow them to retain an honourable place in the politico-economic structure of the Indian society. Judged from this view, the safeguards provided in the Lucknow Pact were inadequate, for they left the Muslim community at the mercy of the "Hindu Banias and landlords" even in those provinces where the Muslims constituted a majority, i. e. Bengal and the Punjab. Continuation of this anamoly was a deliberate discrimination against the Muslims which, the Muslim leaders insisted, must be rectified soon. Voicing the grievances of the Muslim community Mr. Shafaat Ali Khan informed the members of the Reforms Enquiry Committee: "As regards the appointments, I think in the minority provinces, the representation of the Muslims in the Councils does not guarantee effective representation in the administration. They will be permanently in minority in the Local Council, and consequently they can exercise very little control over the administration of the country, so that, unless some safeguards with regard to their representation in the administration are inserted, any change that might be suggested in the structure of the Act, should hesitate to approve of it."[6] While admitting that in the United Provinces the "Muslims and Hindus were fairly evenly balanced"[7] he insisted that Muslims should be assigned a fixed number of posts in the government according to "their political importance." In formulating the safeguards for the Muslims the Government should work on two principles, namely, "the principle of representation according to population and the principle that the minorities should have adequate and effective representation."[8]

In his Memorandum to the Enquiry Committee, Mr. Shafaat Ali Khan spelled out in detail the "fundamental propositions" on behalf of the Muslims as follows:

"1. Before any amendment of the Act is undertaken, the special or communal representation of the Muslims should be maintained."

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6. *Appendix No.* 6. op. cit., Vol. II. p. 79.
7. Ibid., p. 95.
8. Ibid., p. 93.

2. That the majorities should not be turned into minorities in any province, and that the minorities in all provinces should have adequate and effective representation in the province.

3. The Muslims should be adequately and effectively represented in the public services of this country.

4. There must be adequate guarantee as regards religious liberty and freedom of conscience. He further added that the Muslims would never consent to any change in the Act that did not "embody the above propositions in the amendment of the Act."[9]

Similar safeguard for the minority community were demanded by other prominent Muslim leaders of U.P. In a mass meeting of the Muslims held in Agra on August 14, 1924 and addressed by Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University, the following significant resolutions were passed:

"That the form of self-government which does not provide adequate representation of Mussalmans in the Legislative and other electoral bodies, cannot be accepted by the Mussalmans. It is also necessary that the interests of the Mussalmans be safeguarded by fixing an adequate protection in all government posts including the posts recruited by competitive examination and by providing special facilities in their education and by guaranteeing them their full religious liberty and undertaking that no resolution or bill affecting the interests of the Mussalmans will be carried if $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Mussalman members vote against it. These safeguards are essential to maintain Hindu Muslim unity without which Self-Government is impossible. These safeguards should form an integral part of the constitution of the Government and should not be changed if $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Mussalman members vote against it. This meeting emphatically maintains that the Mussalman will not support the grant of any further instalment of the Reform Scheme till the principles laid down in the above resolution are settled."[10]

Nothing tangible came out of the Muddiman Committee Report. Nor did the Congress leadership show any hurry to

9. *Appendix No.* 5, op. cit., p. 328.
10. Ibid., p. 329.

revise the Lucknow Pact on the lines laid down by the League in its three successive sessions, 1924, 1925 and 1926. Accusing the Congress of evading the communal problem Jinnah said: "....Congress point of view on the subject of Muslims was far from reassuring. No responsible Congressman or Hindu leader had come forward with a concrete proposal with regard to the Muslim community. Individual pronouncements were made by one person or another. However, nothing definite was forthcoming. There is no escaping away from the fact, that communalism exists in the country." He, therefore, took upon himself the responsibility of defining the Muslim position and called a meeting of prominent Muslims to discuss the future constitution of India. On March 20, 1927, they came out with what are known as the "Delhi Muslim Proposals" as the terms for an *entente cordiale* between Hindus and Muslims. These proposals demanded (1) that Sind should be made into a separate Province, and (2) that the North-West Frontier Province should be treated on the same footing as other Provinces. It was made clear that "only in the event of these conditions being accepted that the Mussalmans would accept joint electorate with reservation of seats in all provinces, and make concessions to the Hindu minorities in the matter of number of representatives in the three provinces of Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, as Hindu majority provinces would be prepared to make to Mussalman minorities in other provinces."[11] In Punjab and Bengal, the proportion of representation was to be in accordance with the population; in other words, mixed electorate with representation according to population. In the Central Legislature, Muslim representation was not to be less than one-third.[12]

Territorial solution of the communal problem offered by these Muslim leaders was a dangerous proposition. Commenting on the Delhi Proposals Dr. Ambedkar said: "A glance at the above proposal is sufficient to indicate that the object of the scheme is to carve out as many provinces with Muhammedan majority as possible out of the existing system. At present

11. *The Hindustan Times*, March 21, 1927.
12. Idem.

Bengal and Punjab are two provinces with a bare Muslim majority. The proposals, by demanding that in those provinces the representation should be proportionate to population, seek to make the communal majority of the Muslims political majority so that a Muhammedan Government will be assured in those provinces. Baluchistan and North-West Frontier Province have an overwhelming Muslim majority. But they are as yet out of the pale of responsible government with the result that the Muhammedan majority is not the ruling majority. The aim of the proposals is to rectify this anamoly so that they will make four provinces with a Muslim majority with sure chances of forming a Muslim Government. The demand for the formation of Sind which is predominantly Muslim in number into a separate Province is to add a fifth to the list of provinces contemplated by the scheme. Now what is the purpose behind the formation of these Muslim provinces? In the eyes of the Mussalmans themselves it has the same purpose as a communal electorate. For, the authors of the scheme say that they are prepared to give up communal electorates and agree to joint electorates in all provincial legislatures in the Central Legislature provided their proposal of Muhammedan provinces was agreed to. By parity of reasoning it follows that the object of carving out Muhammedan provinces is to protect Muslim minorities; since that was the object of communal electorates. The scheme on the surface does not show how the creation of Muslim Provinces is going to protect the Muslim minorities against Hindu majorities in Provinces in which the Hindus predominate....But if we probe into it we can see that the scheme is neither so innocent nor so bootless as it appears on the surface. At bottom it is an ingenious contrivance for the protection of Muslim minorities. For if the Hindu majority tyrannizes the Muslim minority in the Hindu Provinces the scheme provides a remedy whereby the Muhammedan majorities get a field to tyrannize the Hindu minorities in the five Muhammedan Provinces. It is a system of protection counter-blast against blast; terror against terror and eventually tyranny against tyranny..."[18] Ambedkar's assessment of the "Muslim Proposals" was absolutely

13. *Indian Statutory Committee Report*, Vol. II. p. 90.

correct. Addressing the Muslim League session at Calcutta Maulana Azad proudly claimed: "....The Delhi proposals of last March opened a door for the first time to the recognition of the real rights of the Mussalmans in India. Separate electorates by the pact of 1917 only ensure them Muslim representation but what was vital for the existence of the community was the recognition of its numerical strength. Delhi opened the way to the creation of such a state of affairs as would guarantee to them in the future constitution of India a proper share. Their existing small majority in Bengal and in the Punjab was only the census figure but the Delhi proposals gave them for the first time five provinces of which no less than three contained a real overwhelming majority. *There would be now nine Hindu provinces against five Muslim provinces and whatever treatment Hindus accorded in nine provinces Muslims would accord same treatment to the Hindus in the five provinces. Was it not a great gain? Was not a new weapon gained for the assertion of Muslim rights* ?"[14]

Although the Congress conceded the two main demands of the Muslims, namely, separation of Sind from Bombay and introduction of reforms in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan, it did not agree to their proposals that in Punjab and Bengal Muslim representation should be in accordance with their population and that one-third seats at the centre should be reserved for the Muslims. Even the prospects of Muslim domination over five provinces did not satisfy political ambitons of all leaders. One section of the Muslim League, particularly the Punjab branch, opposed the Delhi scheme tooth and nail. Thus Jinnah's efforts towards Hindu-Muslim unity met the same fate as those of Gāndhi and Mohammad Ali.

The appointment of Simon Commission made some kind of settlement between the Hindus and Muslims imperative. In 1928 the All Parties Conference appointed a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru "to determine the principles of the new constitution." The Report submitted by the Committee recommended the separation of Sind from Bombay and the introduction of similar reforms in the North-

14. *The Hindustan Times,* January 3, 1928.

West Frontier Province as in other provinces. But unlike the authors in the Congress-League Pact of 1916, it made no concession to the Muslim standpoint on the question of separate electorates. On the contrary, it suggested its total abolition. The only safeguard that it allowed was "reservation" of seats to the Muslims at the centre and in the Provinces in which they were in a minority. This reservation of seats was to be in exact proportion to the strength of their numbers. This implied that Muslims would neither have any weightage in the Central Legislature where they were demanding reservation of one-third of the seats for themselves nor any constitutional guarantee that their majority position in the legislatures of Bengal and Punjab would be kept in tact. There was also no provision for provincial autonomy, which might give the Muslims opportunity of ruling over provinces where they were in majority. These recommendations, therefore, were severely criticized by the Muslim leaders. At the All Parties Convention at Culcutta, Jinnah suggested three amendments: 1. one-third Muslim representation at the centre; 2. in the event of adult franchise not being introduced in the Punjab and Bengal, reservation of seats for the Muslims in proportion to their population for ten years subject to re-examination after that period; and 3. residuary powers to vest in the provinces. These amendments however were rejected by the Convention.

The Congress refusal to amend the Nehru Report as suggested by Jinnah has been often termed as a serious "political folly." By this kind of obstinate stand, it is pointed out, the Congress pushed Jinnah, the firm believer in Hindu-Muslim unity, to the rank of the Muslim reactionaries and lost its last chance of creating political unity between the two major communities of India. This conclusion, however, is based on false assumptions. There was nothing in the past history of the Muslim League to encourage the belief that the demands made in 1927 were final. Nor was Jinnah, at least in 1928, the undisputed leader of the Muslim community. The major section of the Muslim League led by Sir Shafi and the Aga Khan did not endorse the proposals made by Jinnah. The final solution of the communal problem did not lie in the liberalism of individuals like Jinnah and Azad, but in the

liberal attitude of the entire Muslim leadership. In spearheading the movement for separation, Jinnah only reflected the political aspiration of the Muslim elite, who had taken recourse to communalism to gain political ends even before his appearance on the Indian political scene. Furthermore, it was only after committing himself totally to the Muslim League philosophy that Jinnah could emerge as the unquestioned leader of the Muslim community. Otherwise, the Muslim of the Punjab and Bengal were not at all anxious to follow his lead. They would have rather accepted an Aga Khan or Shafi than Jinnah who was ready to barter away their interests to placate the "obstinate Hindus." The amendments made by Jinnah were not as innocent as is sometimes believed. What he suggested was nothing short of a political segregation of the two communities on a permanent basis. Jinnah's amendments in no case would have created an atmosphere of co-operation and mutual goodwill; they would have only made the political rivalry more acute. Any party striving for national unity would have tried to resist committing this kind of political *Hara kiri.* The authors of the Nehru Report were able to discern the true motivating force behind the 'Muslim Proposals': "The Muslims being in a minority in India as a whole fear that majority may harass them, and to meet this difficulty they have made a novel suggestion—that they should at least dominate in some parts of India...The Hindus, on the other hand, although in great majority all over India, are in a minority in Bengal and the Punjab and Sind, Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province. In spite of their all-India majority they are afraid of the Muslims in those Provinces."[15] "We cannot have one community domineering over another. We may not be able to prevent this entirely but the object we should aim at is not to give domination to one over another."[16] The famous Fourteen points of Jinnah put forward in 1929 contained nothing new; he merely reiterated the

15. All Parties Conference, 1928. *Report of the Committee Appointed by the Conference to Determine the Principles of the Constitution of India,* Allahabad, 1928, p. 28.

16. Ibid., p. 29.

stand he had taken at the All Parties Convention at Calcutta. The cardinal condition for Hindu-Muslim unity as envisaged by Jinnah was the unhampered rule of the Muslims at least in four provinces of British India, i.e. Sind, the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Bengal.

The nature and direction of Muslim thinking is fully revealed in the memoranda submitted by various Muslim organizations and individual leaders to the Indian Statutory Commission between the years 1928 and 1929.[17] The Memorandum submitted by the Sind Mohammedan Association suggested that "in future the electorates should be divided into four classes, viz., Muslim, depressed classes, miscellaneous communities and caste Hindus; instead of two: Muslim and non-Muslim."[18] Suggestions made by the Bengali Muslims were not less interesting. They wanted eastern Bengal and Assam to be reconstituted as a separate province so that the Muslims could acquire a dominant position in the enlarged Bengal.[19] They also suggested creation of a separate Muslim University at Dacca for the revival of Islamic culture in Bengal. They were grieved to see that the cultural leadership of the Muslim community was in the hands of the "Hinduised Moslem pundits" who could "read and write Bengali and recite Sanskrit"[20], but who could hardly "converse in Urdu and were more or less ignorant of Arbaic and Persian culture."[21]

Muslims of C.P. and Berar, who protested strongly against the "Hindu Raj", justified their numerical superiority in the Police force on the ground that "Hindus as a class are considered, and are really, unsuitable, for Police duties, and only the members of the martial race are recruited and selection is based on other grounds than those of mere literacy and bookish-

17. See Memoranda of the All-India Muslim League, Central Mohammedan Association, Madras Presidency Moslem League, Mussalmans of Central Provinces, Muslims of U.P. in the *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. XVI, Parts I and II.
18. Ibid. Vol XVI, Part I, p. 202.
19. Ibid., Part II, p. 52.
20. Ibid., p. 53.
21. Idem.

ness, which are the prerogatives of some of the clerical castes of the Hindus...."[22] Although the Muslims constituted only three per cent of the population they wanted a share of 25 per cent in the government services of the province. The real cause of communal violence according to them was the "determination of the majority community to establish in its own way its political dominance in India by wiping out and crushing the minority community which not long ago was its ruler."

Members of the Central Muhammedan Association said that the only people in the Indian "Continent" who could claim to be a nation were Muslims. "It is true they do not equal in number to the other great community which inhabits India, but they are seventy million homogeneous souls, with common ideals, and by tradition of race and religion form a solid nationality quite apart from all other people in India, with a separate historic heritage and with a different culture, whilst on the other hand the other large community is divided and sub-divided into caste and sub-caste, and includes many millions of depressed classes, whose shadow is pollution to the caste Hindu."[23] In spite of this fact, "We seek no special privileges; we want only our legitimate share in political rights and political privileges; and nothing more...."[24] It was also emphasized that "....without proper and definite safeguards, the introduction of representative institutions in this country will imperil Muslim interests, and lead to the political extinction of Indian Muslims... Unless the Muslims are adequately represented on these bodies, not only according to their numerical strength, but also according to their historical position, political importance and contribution to the service and defence of the empire"[25] no constitution of India would be acceptable to them. Forty per cent representation on legislative bodies was defined by the Muhammedan Association as the just share to which Muslim minority was entitled as the important community in India. It also suggested :

22. Ibid., p. 460.
23. Ibid., p. 49.
24. Idem.
25. Ibid., p. 50.

(a) Non-official nominated members should be taken equally from the Muslim, Hindus and Europeans; (b) half of the Cabinet, both Imperial and local, should be Indian, of which half should consist of Muslims."[26] The Muslim claim for *parity with the majority in the legislature and administrative service,* the Memorandum stated, *"is not a question of merely loaves and fishes, but it is a question of power, prestige and political influence of a community* and of its opportunity to serve its motherland... It cannot be gainsaid that the political importance of a community depends, in no small measure, on the members of that community who constitute the personnel of the administration, and occupy places in the service of the state...it is, therefore, absolutely necessary...that the Muslim element should be effectively represented in the administration. If this is not done, they would have no hesitation to denounce Indianisation and would prefer to see no extension of Reforms in any direction..."[27]

Similar sentiments were expressed by Dr. Shafaat Ali Khan. He said: "We feel that if our demands are not granted, or we are deprived of those privileges which we exercise to-day, we shall immediately ask His Majesty's Government to scrap the existing Reforms, because our position will be jeopardised, and not only our community but we feel India as a whole will suffer."[28]

In spite of this local and individual variations, represen tatives of the Muslim associations who met the Statutory Commission were unanimous in their demand for recognition of Urdu as the second official language of India, separation of Sind from Bombay, introduction of Reforms in the North-West Frontier Province, one-third representation of the Muslims at the Centre and Statutory guarantee for maintaining the Muslim majority in the provinces of Bengal and Punjab.[29]

In the name of cultural autonomy what the Muslim elite were seeking was political autonomy. If culture was really

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26. Ibid., p. 51.
27. Idem.
28. Ibid., Part I, p. 343.
29. Ibid., Part I, pp. 108, 109, 203; Part II, 31, 52, 54, 260, 481, 487.

their main concern then they could have abandoned their struggle at any stage. The Congress resolution of December 1927 on the religious, political and other rights of the minorities had clearly laid down that: "in the future constitution, liberty of conscience shall be guaranteed and no Legislature, Central or Provincial, shall have power to make any laws interfering with liberty of conscience. Liberty of conscience. means liberty of belief and worship, freedom of religious education and propaganda with due regard to the feelings of others and without interfering with similar rights of others."[30] It was further decided that "no Bill, Resolution, Motion or Amendment regarding inter-communal matter shall be moved, discussed or passed in any Legislature, Central or Provincial, if a three-fourths majority of the Members of either community affected thereby in that Legislature oppose the introduction, discussion, passing of such Bill, Resolution, Motion or Amendment."[31]

The real aim of the "Delhi Proposals" as well as Jinnah's Fourteen Points, however, was to make Muslims permanent rulers of at least five provinces in India and keep them as "effective" group in the rest. Muslims were to act both as a pressure group as well as a ruling class. Their repeated demand that majority should nowhere be reduced to a minority or rendered ineffective was meant to apply only to themselves. After granting one-third representation to the Muslims in the Central Legislature and administration and making similar allowances to other minorities the Hindu majority would have been virtually reduced to a minority and rendered completely ineffective. And this is what was actually intended in these various schemes. In his letter to the British Prime Minister Mohammad Ali (1 January 1931) said: "The Muslims desire—and this is the crux of their 14 points and not separate electorates—that there should be federal government so that the central unitary government with a permanent Hindu majority should not override them everywhere; that they should have at least a third of the British Indian representation in the

30. Gwyer Maurice and Appadorai, A.: *Speeches and Documents on Indian Constitution*, London, 1957, p. 242.

31. Idem.

Federal Government; that in the Provinces of the Punjab and Bengal where they have small majorities in population which are unrecognised, and greatly controlled by the banyas and Sikhs and the Hindu landlords...those majorities should be reserved; that in the North-West Frontier Province and in Balochistan where there are clearly huge Muslim majorities, full reforms should be extended to the Muslims....and that Sind should be made a separate province like Assam; and that the Muslims should be allowed to have their majorities in all these as the Hindus have everywhere else. Unless in these few provinces, Muslim majorities are established by the new constitution, I submit, not as a threat, but as a very humble and friendly warning, there will be civil war in India. Let there be no mistake about that. These are the four or five Provinces where the Muslims should have precisely the same power and same protection as the Muslims demand where they are in minorities."[32]

Communal Award of the British Prime Minister in 1932 fulfilled all the major demands of the Muslim League: separate electorate, Muslim majority in Bengal and the Punjab and one-third representation in the Central Legislature, separation of Sind from Bombay and introduction of Reforms in the North-West Frontier Province. And yet communalism did not come to an end in Indian politics. On 17 October 1937, the League changed its creed from "full responsible Government" to "full independence" and adopted a resolution which read as follows: "Resolved that the object of All-India Muslim League shall be establishment in India of full independence in the form of a federation of free democratic states in which the rights and interests of the Mussalmans and other Minorities are adequately and effectively safeguarded in the Constitution."[33] Precisely after a year, on 10 October 1938, with Jinnah in the chair, the Sind Provincial League declared that it was "absolutely essential in the interests of an abiding peace of the vast Indian continent and in the *interests of unhampered cultural development, the economic and social betterment and*

32. Iqbal, op. cit., pp. 474-75.
33. *The Hindustan Times*, October 18, 1937.

political self-determination of the two nations, known as Hindus and Muslims, that India be divided into two Federations, viz. the Federation of Muslim States and the Federation of non-Muslim States."[34] "This Conference, therefore, recommends to the All-India Muslim League to devise a scheme of Constitution under which Muslim majority Provinces, Muslim Native States, and areas inhabited by a majority of Muslims may attain full independence in the form of Federation of their own with permission to any other state beyond the Indian frontier to join the Federation and with such safeguards to the non-Muslim Minorities as may be conceded to Muslim Minorities in the non-Muslim Federation of India."[35] In 1940 the League came out with its detailed scheme for the partition of India as the ultimate solution of the communal problem.[36]

Mr. Durrani, the author of *Meaning of Pakistan* (1939), in his anxiety to put the entire blame of Pakistan demand on the Hindus had tried to establish that the idea of partition came to Muslim mind only in 1938 when towards the end of that year "voices began to be audible all over India that there were two nations in India, that the Muslims were a nation by their own right."[37] Mr. Durrani was right in pointing out that the masses did not possess a sense of separate nationhood prior to 1941, and that the Lahore resolution of the League was only a formal declaration of what had become an accepted creed of the League. The idea of creating an independent sovereign Muslim state in India had been entertained by some prominent Muslim politicians and intellectuals long before the so-called "persecution" of the Muslims had taken place under the Congress ministries. As early as 1917 Professor Sattar Kheir and Dr. Abdul Jabbar Kheir had discussed with M. Chuysmans, the General Secretary of the Stockholm Socialist International Conference,[38] the idea of dividing India into two

34. *The Hindustan Standard,* October 15, 1938.
35. *The Tribune,* March 23, 1940.
36. *The Tribune, March* 23, 1940.
37. Durrani, F. K. Khan.: *The Meaning of Pakistan,* Lahore, 1943, pp. 114, 115, 119.
38. Ghutye, G.S.: *Social Tensions in India,* Bombay, 1969, p. 261.

parts—Muslim India and Hindu India. The same idea was expressed by Mohammad Abdul Qadir Bilgrami of Badayun in 1920 and by Khan Saheb Sardar Gul Khan in 1923[39] Sardar Gul Khan appearing as a witness before the North-West Frontier Committee appointed by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Sir Denis Bray, had opposed the amalgamation of the Settled District with the Punjab on the ground that "the Hindu-Muslim unity" could "never become a fact." He had pointed out that the Muslims of the North-West Frontier "think that their province should remain separate as a link between Islam and Britanic Commonwealth...."[40] In 1924 Mohammad Ali, during the course of a speech at Aligarh, had prophesied: "if the Hindu-Muslim problem is not settled, India will be divided into Hindu India and Muslim India." In 1930, Sir Mohammad Iqbal when presiding over the annual session of the League, boldly declared: "We would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-Government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India."[41] The credit of christening this proposed Muslim state as Pakistan goes to Chaudhari Rahmat Ali, who in his pamphlet *'Now or Never'* issued in 1933 in London, declared : "The Muslims of Pakistan, a distinct nation, with a homeland of the size of France and population equal to the French, demand the recognition of a separate-nation status."

Even during the long period when the Muslim leaders claimed a minority status for their community, they insisted that the Muslims must be accorded "special treatment" on the ground of the role they had played in Indian history. The phrase "special treatment" when elaborated in concrete terms implied parity or near parity with the majority. Some of the Muslim members of the Congress tried to secure for this Muslim claim an official recognition by the Congress. In 1888, Ali

39. Qureshi, I. H., op. cit., p. 295-96.
40. *Report of the North-West Inquiry Committee*, 1924, pp. 122-23.
41. Jafri, op. cit., p. 12.

Muhammad Bhimji wanted the Congress to accept the principle that "the number of Muhammedan members shall always be equal to that of the Hindus, both in the Imperial and provincial Councils."[42] Haji Mohammad Ismail wrote to the Congress President in 1896 that the Hindu-Muslim unity should be worked out on the basis of "equality of political representation" between the two communities. The Congress must decide by a resolution that "in the Councils of the Government and in municipal and local boards the Hindus and Mussalmans may have an equal number of elected members."[43] In the Bombay session of the All-India Congress in 1911 two Muslim delegates from U.P. made a serious bid to get a resolution of this nature passed. Maulvi Rajiuddin of Lucknow proposed that the number of the Muslims should be equal to the Hindus in all Councils.[44] A Muslim delegate from Moradabad was not content with a ratio of less than three Muslims to every Hindu in all legislatures.[45] Writing in 'Comrade' in 1914, Mohammad Ali had expressed the desire: "If we could choose a motto for a society of nation-makers in India we could suggest nothing better than what the U.S.A. have adopted on their coin. India is to be a *pluribus unum*."[46] On another occassion he had said: "We may not create to-day the patriotic frenzy of Japan with its forty millions of homogeneous people. But a concord like that of Canada is not beyond the bounds of practicability. It may not be a love marriage born of romance and poetry, but a *marriage de convenance*...."[47] Mohammad Ali found the "Federation of Faiths" the only suitable political solution for India. Ten years later, in 1923, he put this ideal before the Congress leaders at Kokanada.[48]

After the publication of the Nehru Report, Kazi Talarmuz

42. Quoted in Zakaria, Rafiq: *The Rise of Muslims in Indian Politics*, Bombay, 1970, p. 129-30.
43. Zakaria, op. cit., p. 85.
44. *The Tribune*, May 11, 1911.
45. Idem.
46. *Comrade*, January 4, 1914.
47. Ibid., January 14, 1911.
48. See Mohammad Ali's speech in *Presidential Speeches*, op. cit.

and his associates, who had become self-appointed guardians of "Muslim rights", came out with their counter-proposal on the basis of which they wanted the majority community to make settlement with the Muslims. The Muslim share of power was carefully outlined in detail by the Kazi. Some of his important suggestions were: 1. The Indian army should be "composed from the very beginning of two Muslim units for one non-Muslim unit and this ratio be permanently kept."[49] 2. 'To the extent Indians are admitted into higher Executive of the country, central or provincial, to that extent Muslims and non-Muslims be placed on the equal footing."[50] 3. "The Secretariat be composed of equal proportion of Muslims and non-Muslim elements."[51] 4. "In the Executive branch of the government, the position of Muslims and non-Muslims be kept equalized."[52]

Obviously, the Muslim leaders could not have hoped to obtain such a fantastic share of power to the members of a minority community in any democratic set up. But as a separate nation, this share of power could be theirs. By the end of the third decade of the 20th century they had already obtained all the concessions they could demand as a minority. The fulfilment of the remaining aspirations required a drastic change in the political demands on which the separatist Muslim movement had rested so far. This could be nothing but the demand for a separate "homeland" for the Muslims.

Muslim communalism passed through three distinct stages. At first the Muslim leaders opposed the principle of open competition and made the superior historical role played by their community the basis of their claim to appointments in government services. In the second stage, separate Muslim representation in the legislative and executive bodies of the government was sought on the ground that Muslim community

49. Husain, Kazi Talarmuz: *The Case of the Muslims*, Secundrabad, 1929, pp. 93-101.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

and culture could not survive as distinct entities without this. Finally, a new slogan was raised that if the demand for the territorial division of the country was not accepted, the Muslim community and culture would be wiped out. Thus what was once the political ambition of a minority community turned into a firm resolve to create a new nation.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODS OF MASS MOBILIZATION IN MUSLIM COMMUNAL MOVEMENT

FOR a long time, the upper-class Muslims, in other words the Muslim leadership, had operated without paying any attention to the other sections of their community. The political success of the Congress in the general elections of 1937 came as a warning to them of the impending danger. In particular, the threat posed by the decision of the All-India Congress to establish direct contact with the Muslim masses and Jawaharlal Nehru's advocacy of socialism could not be set aside lightly.[1] It was obvious that the Muslim League could not carry through its political programme without evolving a new strategy to win over the Muslim masses. The League had to figure out some new and concrete issues which could appeal to the emotions and sentiments of the Muslims and bring them together under its leadership. The abstract ideal of universal Muslim brotherhood (Millet) had a fascination for the educated middle classes, but had very little meaning for the illiterate masses whose narrow perspective did not extend beyond their villages. Unless the Muslim community, in whose name the upper-class Muslims had centralized power in their hands, became a compact whole, the claim for separate homeland for the "Muslim Nation" could not be entertained seriously either by the Government or by the Congress. The bond of religion, though important, was not strong enough to act as a sole unifying force. The Muslim masses had to be convinced that alongside the tie of religion there were other common links which bound them together.

A new vitality had to be introduced in the League if it was to have any mass appeal. Describing the state of Muslim League and nature of its leadership in 1934, Khaliquzzamn writes: "It was dominated by the titled gentry, Nawabs, Land-

1. *Bombay Chronicle*, January 12 and 13, 1937.

lords and *Jee Huzoors*.... Since its birth in 1906, the Muslim League's activities were always confined to indoor political shows. Even its annual sessions were held either in well-decorated pandals or in big halls where a few honourable visitors were allowed by special invitation. Mass meetings were unknown to the Musim League organization.... After the break up of the Khilafat Movement, a new set of Nawabs took up the guardianship of this auspicious child which offered them vast opportunities of acquiring honours and titles through their association with this institution. The measure of sacrifice for these custodians of political citadel of the community consisted in their attending annual sessions, receiving a chorus of praise from their equally honourable hosts in some big city.... The proceedings, after the session, were duly sent to the press, but long before that the British officials received news from their own inner sources of every word spoken in the meeting. The end of the session was the end of the organization for the year."[2] Iqbal regarded this exclusive character of the League as a big roadblock. In one of his letters (28 May 1937) he warned Jinnah : "....I have no doubt that you fully realize the gravity of the situation as far as Muslim India is concerned. The League will have to finally decide whether it will remain a body representing the upper classes of Indian Muslims or Muslim masses who have so far, with good reason, taken no interest in it. -Personally I believe that a political organization which gives no promise of improving the lot of the average Muslim cannot attract our masses.... Under the new constitution, the higher posts go to sons of upper classes; the smaller ones go to the friends or relatives of the ministers. In other matters, too, our political institutions have never thought of improving the lot of Muslims generally."[3]

Consequently, the whole organization of the League was overhauled. District branches were established in the farthest corners of the country, a Central Parliamentry Board was set

2. Khaliquzzaman. Chaudhary: *Pathway to Pakistan*, Lahore. 1961. p. 137.
3. *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah, Lahore*, 1942. pp. 17. 18. Pirzada. Shariuddin (ed.): *Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, Karachi. 1946. pp. 158-59.

up, and the constitution of the Muslim League was sufficiently amended to enable it to play its newly assumed role effectively.[4] While the supreme command of the League remained in the hands of the title-holders and landlords, at the lower levels the leadership was entrusted to educated middle classes and the Ulema.

To win the support of the entire community, the Muslim League had to concentrate on the problems which concerned the general masses. The economic plight of the lower strata of the Muslim community was the most vulnerable point where the citadel of "Muslim Nation" could be breached successfully by the Congress ideology of socialism. Drawing Jinnah's attention to the miserable condition of the Muslim masses, Iqbal wrote: "The problem of bread is becoming more and more acute.... The question therefore is: how is it possible to solve the problem of Muslim poverty? And the whole future of the League depends on the League activity to solve this question. If the League can give no such promise, I am sure the Muslim masses will remain indifferent to it as before."[5] The League had nothing to lose by giving such promises. Simple struggle for power was now projected as the struggle for economic survival. The leaders of the Muslim League suddenly became aware of the possibility of the tremendous economic loss the Muslim masses would suffer under a Hindu majority rule. Jinnah declared that the interests of the Muslims who were already "economically bankrupt and financially zero" could never be identified with the "capitalist Hindus."[6] The Muslims were warned that in a united India the agricultural North-West will become dependent on the industrialized Hindu India. Thus Pakistan "will lose her foreign market for raw materials and will be compelled to sell her produce to Hindu India in exchange of protected, competition-free and consequently badly manufactured goods. Pakistan will be

4. Khaliquzzaman, op. cit., p. 172-73.
5. Iqbal's Letters, op. cit., p. 18.
6. Ahmad, Jamaluddin (ed.): *Speeches and Writings of Mr. Jinnah*, Vols. I and II. Lahore. 1946. See Lucknow Speech, 1937, p. 25; Delhi Speech, 1939, p. 130.

reduced to an agricultural hinterland. Pakistan will not be able to develop its industry unless it cuts itself adrift economically from rest of India."[7]

The socialist solution suggested by Nehru was vehemently opposed by Muslim leaders on religious and cultural grounds. Muslims were told: "If socialistic principles of class war were to succeed, it would mean the break up of this (Muslim) unity. It would divide them into different classes and incite members of one class to wage a relentless war against the other, which means they would no longer be members of the same unit. The lower strata of society directly or indirectly derives all knowledge of religion and culture from the middle classes and the most fatal result of this class war would be to prevent the poorer people from getting a constant flow of religious and cultural inspiration and would thus make them safe for atheism."[8] Even though violence and hatred were justified against the non-Muslims, the ideal of violent upheaval of the lower strata of the Muslim society against their economic exploitation in the future state of Pakistan was not favoured by the intellectuals of the Muslim League. There, the economic revolution had to come in a non-violent and peaceful manner, even if "such a revolution" was to take "a hundred years for its fulfilment."[9] Getting frightened at the Muslim Mass Contact Movement launched by the Congress, the leaders of the Muslim League took shelter behind religion to safeguard their position. "By this movement", the authors of the Pirpur Report wrote, the Congress "is trying to destroy Muslim solidarity and create disruption in the community. A number of Muslim workers have been employed to fight their own co-religionists by a political party which is predominently Hindu....."[10] The Muslim Mass Contact Movement was nothing else but a policy of "divide and rule" which the Con-

7. Alp Arslan: *Pakistan Explained, Lahore,* 1945, pp. 14, 15; A Punjabi: *Confederacy of India,* Lahore, 1939, p. 99.
8. Dar Bashir: *Why Pakistan,* Lahore, 1946, pp. 155, 157.
9. Durrani, op. cit., Chaps. IX, X.
10. *Pirpur Report,* Lucknow, 1938, p. 10.

gress was following in order "to avoid a settlement with the Muslim community on the real issues."[11]

Though the leaders of the Muslim League rejected socialism outright, they kept on harping on the economic backwardness of the Muslim community to support their argument that only the separate state of Pakistan could provide adequate protection against further economic degradation of the Muslim community. Iqbal wrote to Jinnah (28 May 1937): ".... in order to make it possible for Muslim India to solve the problem (of poverty) it is necessary to redistribute the country and to provide one or more Muslim states with absolute majorities. Don't you think that the time for such a demand has already arrived? Perhaps this is the best reply you can give to the atheistic socialism of Jawaharlal Nehru."[12]

Since the scheme for partition was presented by the Muslim League as the final solution of Muslim poverty, it did not concern itself with any concrete economic programme for the amelioration of the Muslim masses of the undivided India. Nevertheless, the League was successful in attracting the educated middle class to its rank for whom the possibility of the creation of a state of Pakistan held out great prospects of employment. The hope of virtual monopoly of government services in the promised land was too alluring to be resisted. By winning over the educated middle class, the upper-class Muslims had struck an alliance with those, who like them, had a vested interest in the division of the country. The ignorant masses were left to interpret the economic implications of Pakistan according to their own imagination. Thus, long before Jinnah chose to make his final demand for partition, the Muslim community of India had already been prepared to march towards its *El Dorado*.

In order to arouse the Muslim masses to demand political rights for their community, the Muslim leaders kept on reminding them of the long history of Muslim rule in India. In the 19th century, Sir Syed Ahmad had prayed to the Government to nominate only the upper-class Muslims to the legislative

11. Ibid., p. 13.
12. Letters of Iqbal, op. cit., p. 19.

bodies and public services because they belonged to the ruling class which had held command over India before the establishment of the British rule. Later, the Muslim leadership broadened the concept of the "ruling class" and projected the entire Muslim community as the historical ruling race. In contrast to the Hindus, it was expounded, the Muslims possessed special qualities associated with the ruling race. They were strong, knew how to govern and had the physical strength which the "cowardly Hindu lacked."[13] The notion of Muslim racial superiority was instilled through cheap propaganda literature in the masses. Seven hundred years of Muslim domination over India was cited as a supreme proof of their racial superiority. Sir A. M. K. Dehlvi, a prominent member of the League, was confident of solving the communal problem in a few weeks' time provided the Government kept its hands off its obligation to maintain law and order and left the Muslims alone to settle the minority problem with the Hindus.[14] The Raja of Mahmudabad presiding over the provincial Muslim League Conference held in Delhi on 4 April 1939 declared: "Let the Karars (money-lenders) know that a community that once conquered India with 8 soldiers can dictate its terms even today. If any hinderance is placed in our way to the formation of Muslim Federation, the ears of Karars would be boxed and they will have to lick the dust. The community still plays a part in the world history and if the noisy pen-drivers, as the Hindus are, dare oppose us, they shall be effaced from the earth."[15] Mohammad Lalji of Madras was sure that the Muslims would rule over the major portion of India as their "revered ancestors" had done in the past. Presiding over the Ittehad ul-Mussalman on 12 August 1940 at Ambejgai he said: "The Hindus are the conquered people. We are ever ready to extend the hand of friendship to them. We will live with them with

13. Alp Arslan, op. cit., pp. 8, 9; Dar, op. cit., pp. 7, 8; El Hamza: *Pakistan a Nation,* Lahore, 1941, pp. 10 to 12; Durrani, op. cit., p. 147; Maulana Mohammad Ali's Letter to MacDonald, 1931, in Jafri, op. cit.
14. Kulkarni, V.B.: *Is Pakistan Necessary,* Bombay, 1944, pp. 145-46.
15. Prakash, Inder: *Where We Differ Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha,* New Delhi, 1942, p. 259.

amity.... But, oh Mussalmans, you are the rulers and they are the ruled. You should never forget this relationship. We should not allow the Hindus or even the Government in this State, to degrade in the least the status and authority of the Mussalmans."[16] Fazalul Haq, the Premier of Bengal, assured his co-religionists: "If Mohammad bim Qasim, an 18-year-old lad, with 8 soldiers could conquer Sind, then surely 9 crores of Muslims can conquer the whole of India."[17]

The propaganda had the desired psychological effect on the masses. It was gratifying for a Muslim commoner to think that he belonegd to the Master race, that he was one of the descendants of the Sultans and Emperors of India. He would definitely fight for Pakistan where his destiny would be fulfilled. To prove the eternal superiority of Muslims over Hindus, Maulana Akbar Shah of Najibabad proposed that "the Hindus and Muslims should fight, under test conditions....a fourth battle of Panipat." The Maulana issued a challenge to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya in the following words: "If you, Malaviyaji are making efforts to falsify the result at Panipat, I shall show you an easy and excellent way (of testing it).... As there are seven crores of Mussalmans in India, I shall arrive on the fixed date on the plain of Panipat with 700 Mussalmans representing seven crores of Moslems in India and as there are 22 crores of Hindus I allow you to come with 2,200 Hindus.... If you cannot accept the post of generalissimo of the Hindu host, you may give it to any descendants of Sadashivrao or Vishwasrao so that their scions may have an opportunity to avenge the defeat of their anscestors in 1761.... In conclusion, I beg to add that among 700 men that I shall bring there will be no Pathans or Afghans as you are mortally afraid of them...."[18] Mr. Durrani reminded the Hindus that "though the Muslims are in minority, they have always enjoyed a prestige for their military prowess, and Hindus, in spite of their numbers, have been but sheep before them...."[19] Muslims of

16. Ibid., p. 260.
17. Ibid., p. 259.
18. *The Times of India,* March 14, 1928.
19. *Durrani,* op. cit., p. xii; *Hindustan or Pakistan. Partition or Unity,* Author? Date? pp. 20, 21.

India were asked not to forget that "there is not an inch of the soil of India which our fathers did not once purchase with their blood.....India, the whole of it, is therefore our heritage and it must be reconquered for Islam."[20] Addressing the Muslim students of the Punjab Mr. Jinnah explained: "Our demand is not from the Hindus because the Hindus never took whole of India. It was the Muslims who took India and ruled for 700 years."

Lest the racial memories and economic prospects should fail to produce the desired miracle of uniting the diverse elements within their community, the elite made extensive use of the propaganda machinery to arouse a fear psychosis in the Muslim mind. Muslims were made aware of the dangers they would have to face if the political power passed into the hands of the Hindus. Once the "Hindu raj" was established, their religion would be destroyed and if possible the Hindu would exterminate the entire Muslim population of India as the Germans had done in the case of the Jews. The master race in India was in imminent danger of being enslaved by those who had been its slaves for centuries. The Muslims were warned that if the nationalists won their political battle they would "impose the culture of the Hindu monsoon-land upon the Islamic North-West. They would like to use their political control to transform the Aryan eaters of wheaten bread and meat into dhoti-clad vegeterians, and change the intensely democratic worshippers of One God to a caste-ridden society worshipping a million stones, insects, animals, human-beings and divine beings. They would replace the bulbous domes, Saracenic arcades, storeyed minarets, marble trellises and coloured mosaic of the Mughal buildings with shapeless masses of stone everywhere displaying riotous abundance of pillars and human figures with many arms or many legs or having elephants' trunks for noses.... They would deaden the martial spirit of the Indo-Afghans by preaching to them the hypocritical creed of non-violence and afterwards merge them into the inert mass of the conservative Aryo-Dravidian society."[21] A Urdu song

20. Idem.

21. El Hamza, op. cit., pp. 122-23.

sung at a public meeting in the presence of the Chief Minister of Sind runs as follows:

> "The abode of the Muslim nation would brighten up
> No idolatrous thorns.
> They (Hindus) whose function is to be slaves
> Have no right to participate in the Government.
> Nowhere have they succeeded in governing."[22]

A popular Bengali song invited the Muslims to :

> "Come quickly, break down Lathemanath
> If you want freedom, Burn, Burn, Burn.
> The Jatu-Griha (Hindu-Houses) and let all troubles end."[23]

Identifying the Indian National Congress with the Hindus, it was said that the "Congress cult" was "associated with hypocritical whining about non-violence, scraggy chocolate-coloured longevity-seekers sitting in loin-cloth and weaving metaphysical hocus-pocus with subtle schemes of economic pressures, five-foot-four-inch processionists with flat noses and bulging cheeks shouting outlandish slogans in shrill voices—all this smelling strongly of....an inordinate hatred and fear of the Muslims."[24] "....The Congress is an organization of Aryo-Dravidian Hindus who dream of establishing imperial control over the vast regions of the Mongoloid east, the Dravidian south and the Aryan north-west with its Indo-Persian culture."[25]

For years the mind of the Muslim masses was systematically fed on this kind of rabid propaganda. It was impressed on the Muslim masses that the security of their life, honour, and above all their religion lay in complete separation from the Hindus. It must be emphasized here that this poison of hatred was not spread by the half-educated fanatic demagogues only. Some of the stalwarts of the Muslim League and eminent Muslim intellectuals, were equally responsible for it. The educated Muslims observed no restraints in denigrating the nationalist leaders. In fact, this kind of propaganda had become a part of the League

22. Munshi, K.M.: *Akhand Bharat*, Bombay, 1942, pp. 13, 14.
23. Ibid., p. 13.
24. El Hamza, op. cit., p. 101.
25. Ibid., p. 121.

programme through a resolution passed at its Lucknow Session in 1937.[26] By this resolution the League had asked Muslim intellectuals to produce two types of literature, one meant for the mass consumption and the other for the intelligensia.

The naive belief of the nationalist leaders that the two communities could be brought together through their efforts did not permit them to grasp the real issue. They understood Muslim separatism only in terms of religious antagonism, while in truth, it was mainly political. Once the element of political competition filtered down to the masses, social relations between the communities could not remain harmonious. The unity of India was to be the ultimate casualty of the social explosions generated by this political rivalry. In the midst of the communal holocaust, which always left behind legacies of horror, hate, and fear, the appeals of Gandhi and Nehru for communal harmony went unheard. The Unity Conferences organized for this purpose produced further disunity. Simon Commission's observations on the communal riots are worth quoting here. According to the Commission "....the communal riots were manifestation of the anxiety and ambitions aroused in both communities by the prospect of India's political future. So long the authority was firmly established in the British hands and self-government was not thought of, Hindu-Muslim rivalry was confined within narrower field...."[27]

The Muslim elite erected the edifice of Muslim unity on the rock of the fear of Hindu domination. Addressing a public meeting at Sylhet on January 27, 1939, Maulana Sobhani told the Muslims "....there should be no fight with the English on behalf of the Moslem League. Our big fight is with 22 crores of Hindu enemies, who constitute the majority. Only $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores of Englishmen have practically swallowed the whole world by becoming powerful. And if these 22 crores of Hindus who are equally advanced in learning, intelligence and wealth as in numbers, if they become powerful, these Hindus will swallow Moslem India and gradually even Egypt, Turkey, Kabul, Mecca, Medina and other Moslem principalities...."[28]

26. *Resolution of the Muslim League*, op. cit., pp. 11, 12.
27. *Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. I, p. 29.
28. Ambedkar, op. cit., p. 271.

Maulana Sobhani further remarked: "The English are gradually becoming weak....they will go away from India in the near future. So if we do not fight the greatest enemies of Islam, the Hindus, from now on and make them weak, then they will not only establish *Ramrajya* in India but also gradually spread all over the world. It depends on the 9 crores of Indian Moslems either to strengthen or to weaken them (Hindus). So it is the essential duty of every devout Moslem to fight on by joining the Moslem League so that the Hindu rule may not be established here and a Moslem rule may be established as soon as the English depart."[29] The Muslim leaders were successful in producing the miracle of transforming a religious minority into a nation by such propaganda. But it was a nationalism based on fear and inspired by hatred.

The religious sentiments aroused by such propaganda were fully exploited by Jinnah to settle political scores. In the beginning he had always talked in terms of "seats" and "reservations". Later, the conditions laid down by him before the Congress also included items which had little political relevance. Their sole purpose was to keep the Muslim mobs agitated. In his letter to Nehru he demanded that the Congress should participate in the Shahidganj mosque agitation; the Muslims' right to Azan and performance of other religious ceremonies should not be interfered with; Muslims should have freedom to perform cow-slaughter etc.[30] It was during this later phase of Jinnah's leadership that popular Islamic symbols were adopted by the Muslim League with the clear intention of arousing the fervour and fury of the Muslim masses. Political issues were deliberately underplayed to highlight instances of religious persecution. Within three years, 1937 to 1940, the cause of the League became an Islamic cause and a movement for political rights assumed the character of a religious struggle. Political victory over the Congress was depicted as the triumph of Islam over *Kufr*.[31] Addressing a public meeting on April 17, 1938 Fazlul Haq said: "If Panipat and Thaneswar must repeat

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29. *Savarkar Papers, Film No.* 3.
30. Pirzada, op. cit., p. 49 to 51.
31. Broomfield, op. cit., p. 163.

themselves, let the Muslims prepare as glorious an account of themselves as their forefathers.....may your decisions bring nearer the day of Islam's deliverance in India." In 1937, the Lucknow Session of the Muslim League opened with the unfurling of the Muslim flag with the crescent. A year later it was adopted as the official flag.[32] A resolution was passed to condemn "the attitude of the Congress in foisting Bande Matram as the National Anthem upon the country as callous, positively anti-Islamic, idolatrous in its inspiration...."[33]

Incitement to communal violence and hatred created the necessary psychological atmosphere, but it was through the agency of the Ulema that the 20th century elite were successful in projecting their class interest and aspirations as the interest and aspirations of the entire Muslim community. As stated earlier, the upper-class Muslims had no direct contact with the masses. Leadership at this level had remained in the hands of the Ulema who stood as a bridge between the upper-class Muslims and the Muslim masses. Their activities could always cut through the class and group barriers and embrace the whole community. In fact, it was they who kept the loose unity of the community intact and controlled the corporate Muslim life. The interest of the Ulema in politics was not a new development. Much before the foundation of the Central Mohammedan Association or the All-India Muslim League, the Ulema had made a serious bid to create an independent Muslim state in India to save Islam from being annihilated by the politically successful Hindu chiefs. When the efforts of Shah Waliullah to rejuvenate the Mughal empire through foreign aid had proved sterile, his followers, after his death, tried to secure the mass support to fulfil his mission. In the first decade of the 19th century, the Ulema of northern India under the descendants of Shah Waliullah embarked on the project of establishing an independent Islamic state in the North-West Frontier region. They formed their own militia and preached *Jehad* against all non-Muslim powers, including the British. Syed Ahmad Brelvi

32. *Resolutions of All-India Muslim League*, op. cit., Resolution No. 6, 1938, pp. 17, 18.

33. Ibid., Resolution No. 6, p. 5.

informing Sikandar Jah of Hyderabad wrote: "Since some years past through the command of God the Indian polytheists and European infidels have gained predominance over the territories of various persons (Muslims) of rank and honour, it is now incumbent upon the Muslims to take up swords to defend the honour of Islam."[34] In a letter to the ruler of Bokhara he explained the Indian political situation thus: "As a matter of fact the Indian territories are not *Dar-ul-Harb,* but the *Kafirs* of Hind and Firang (Europe) have at the moment obtained dominance over it. It is, therefore, obligatory on the entire Muslim population in general and the eminent Muslims in particular that they should liberate it (from the hands of the usurpers). So far as this *faqir* is concerned, he is striving in this direction to the extent that lies within his measures."[35] The call for liberation of Islamic territories was given by Syed Abdul Aziz, the son of Shah Waliullah, who declared India to be *Dar-ul-Harb* and made it obligatory for every Muslim to participate in the *Jehad* against the *Kafirs.*[36] Syed Ahmad Barelvi toured different parts of northern India to raise money and enlist soldiers to defend Islam and create an Islamic state in India.[37] Thus the functions performed by the Muslim ruling class in the preceding centuries were now taken over by the religious leaders.

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34. Nadvi, A. Hasan Ali: *Sirat-i-Syed Ahmad Barelvi,* vol. p. 379; Rizvi, S.A.A.: *Ideological Background of the Wahabi Movement in the XVIII and XIX Centuries,* in *Ideas in History,* B. Prasad (ed.), Bombay, 1968, p. 98.
35. Rizvi, op. cit., p. 98; Barelvi wrote to Sardar Mohammad Khan and Sardar Syed Mohammad Khan: "I aspire to promulgate the orders of the Creator of the Worlds without any reservations." To Prince Kamran he wrote: "The country (North-West Frontier) after being purged of the polytheisms, ...will be entrusted to those who are worthy and possess the genuine capability for running administration, provided they are thankful to God for the gift and always prepared to continue the holy war through fire and water.... Then with my followers I will march towards India with the aim of purifying the country from polytheism and infidelity." Quoted in Nadvi, op cit., pp. 362, 363.
36. Rizvi, op. cit., p. 99.
37. Rai Chaudhary, P.C.: *Inside Bihar,* Calcutta, 1962, pp. 144 to 154.

The access the Ulema enjoyed to the Muslim masses was of immense importance in their political mobilization. Even to counteract the consequences of the Wahabi and Faraizi movements, and to proclaim their loyalty to "Malikah" Victoria, the upper-class educated Muslims had sought the assistance of the Ulema. Fatwas were obtained from the Ulema of Mecca and northern India by the Muslim leaders to pronounce India under the British rule as *Dar-ul-Islam*.[38] Mr. Jinnah, though personally not in favour of aligning the Muslim League with the Ulema, was compelled to send his emissaries to the religious leaders in 1937 to solicit their support for the demand for Pakistan. By Resolution No. 15 passed at the Patna Session of the League in 1938 it was decided that, "in *every province and district where the spiritual influence of the Ulema could be utilized for the purpose (of propaganda), brief Fatwas and monifestos should be issued on behalf of the Ulema in which the Muslims should be warned against joining the Congress* and disadvantages from the religious point of view of any association with the Congress should be clearly and emphatically explained to them. *Fatwas to be published....in the language of each province or district.*"[39] It was also decided that "in consultation with the Ulema some suitably qualified Muslims should be appointed to address Friday congregations and other Muslim gatherings."[40] In other words, after raising the slogan for the partition of the country, it had become necessary for the Muslim leaders to arouse the masses, and the only way this could be accomplished was to work through the religio-political preachings of the Ulema. To establish direct contact with the Muslim masses similar tactics were employed by the Congress. It deputed Maulana Azad to win the support of the leading Ulema organization to the nationalist cause. Its success, however, remained partial, and by and large the Ulema of India co-operated with the League.

The political ideology of the Ulema could never be secular

38. Khan. Sir Syed Ahmad: *Review of Dr. Hunter's India Mussalmans*, Reprint, Lahore, Date? Appendixes I, II.

39. *All-India Muslim League Resolutions*, op. cit., p. 57.

40. Idem.

or national. Nationalism as it is understood in the West was bound to remain an anathema to them. Whatever they called nationalism was just another version of Muslim communalism. Even on the international plane they could think only in terms of a universal Khilafat or a Pan-Islamic state. It would be absolutely wrong, therefore, to interpret the anti-British attitude of the Ulema as a manifestation of nationalistic feelings. The Ulema did *not view the British domination of India as her subjection to foreign master; for them it was subjection of Islam to Kufr.* To defend Islam from *Kufr,* these Ulema considered it a virtuous act to invite foreign Muslim invaders to conquer India. During the Khilafat movement the Indian Ulema made secret overtures to the Amir of Afghanistan pledging him the support of the Indian Muslims.[41] On the theoretical plane their world view did not recognize such entities as nation; on the practical plane their politics could be nothing but communal.

The much-applauded opposition of the Ulema of Deoband to the politics of Sir Syed Ahmad and later to that of the Muslim League was not inspired by any nationalistic ideology. Maulana Nanawtawi of the Deoband School had opposed Sir Syed Ahmad not because his stand was communal but because he was "hurt" and "dissatisfied" with Sir Syed Ahmad's modern Interpretation of Islam.[42] The former did not want Islam to lose its purity in the name of modernity—reasons which by no stretch of imagination can be termed nationalistic or secular. They were purely Islamic and communal. The aims laid down in the constitution of the Jamiyat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind were:

1. To guide the followers of Islam in their political and non-political matters from a religious point of view.

2. To defend, on Shari grounds, Islam, centres of Islam, Islamic rituals and customs and *Islamic nationalism* against all odds injurious to them.

3. To achieve and protect general religious and national rights of the Muslims.

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41. See Mr. Hussain Ahmad's letter in *Young India,* May 1921; also *Leader,* April 23, 1921, May 13, 1921.

42. Syed Mian: *Jamiyat ul-Ulama kya hai,* Part I, Lucknow, p. 129.

4. *To fight for the freedom of the country and religion according to the Shari objectives.*[43]

In 1939 some of the provisions of the Jamiyat's constitution were amended. The Jamiyat now took up the additional responsibility of organizing "the Millat-i-Islamiyah into a Shari body and establish mahakhim-i-Shariyah."[44] It was also to "work for the religious, educational, moral, social and economic reforms of the Muslims, and to propagate Islam, by way of missionary activities, in India to their best ability."[45]

The Ulema were afraid that if the British rule continued, it would ruthlessly destroy whatever "dim imprint of Islamic hegemony was left in this country." They held the British Government responsible for destroying Muslim system of education, replacing their religious laws with man-made laws and *qazis* and *muftis* with non-Muslim judges in the Indian courts; in short for destroying Islamic cultural values. On the other hand, they were confident that "once the British regime was dissolved the Hindus would come to terms with the Muslims who formed the strong minority and could not be deprived of their legitimate rights."[46] What these legitimate rights were, though they were never defined in elaborate terms, can still be gleaned from the writings and utterances of prominent religious leaders. Short of territorial partition, they were such as to enable the Muslim community to retain in an absolute and distinct manner, its political, legal and social identity.

Moreover, Ulema's "loyalty to Islamic countries also demanded the immediate end of the British rule in India." They thought that "imperial England in order to keep hold on a rich country like India, had to have its domination over the Muslim countries in the Middle-East. The independence of India meant liberation of a vast Muslim area."[47] Altmash Shah Muniuddin Ajmeri, in his presidential address of the ninth session of the Jamiyat in 1930 declared: "Our greatest enemy is Great Britain who, having India and its vast resources under

43. Faruqi, op. cit., p. 68.
44. Ibid., p. 69.
45. Idem.
46. Ibid., pp. 71, 118.
47. Ibid., p. 71.

her tyrannical observations, is the main cause for our degeneration and destruction in India and for the untold misery and ruin in Islamic countries outside India. ."[48] The zeal with which the Ulema of India conducted the Khilafat movement, impressive as it was, also revealed the main reason for their opposition to the British rule in India. Those who could not understand the contemporary nationalistic aspirations of the Arabs against the Turks could not be imbued with the kind of nationalism which set thousands of Indians aflame. These very Ulema, who collected thousands of rupees to help the autocratic Turkish Sultan, the Khalifa, did not exhibit similar zeal for causes purely Indian.

Similarly the Ulema's advocacy for a united India was solely inspired by their concern for Islam and the Muslims of India. They repeatedly warned the leaders of the Muslim League that creation of Pakistan by dividing the Indian Muslims in three widely separate groups would weaken their position *vis-a-vis* the Hindus. They insisted that partition should be avoided because it would ultimately prove harmful to the Indian Muslims. As expressed by Maulana Madani the Pakistan movement was nothing less than a "death knell for the Muslims of the area where they are in a minority."[49] The narrow perspective of the Ulema could make them aware of only that harm which the partition of the country could bring to the Indian Muslims. The unity and security of the Indian nation were not the things they were worried about. Furthermore, the so-called nationalist Ulema who stood for a united India saw in the suggested partition of the land an unsurmountable obstacle in the way of their proselytizing activities. Addressing a meeting at Delhi in 1945, Maulana Madani had pointed out "the great object of an over-all spread of Islam in the whole of India cannot be realized by appealing to passions of hatred and antagonism. It is the non-Muslims who are the field of action for the 'tabligh' of Islam and form the raw material for this splendid activity. To-day, by propagating hatred

48. Idem.
49. Madni, Husain Ahmad: *An Open Letter to Moslem League*, Lahore, 1946, p. 44.

towards the Hindus, this field is being closed and this material wasted...."[50] "Our object is to bridge the gulf of hatred which is being created by the propagandists of the scheme of Pakistan: we are opposed to the idea of limiting the right of missionary activities of Islam within any particular area. The Muslims have got a right in all the nooks and corners of India by virtue of the great struggle and grand sacrifice of their ancestors in this country. Now it is our duty to maintain that claim and try to widen its scope, instead of giving it up."

On the other hand, the Ulema who had thrown themselves body and soul in the Pakistan movement had done so in the belief that Pakistan would be an ideal Islamic state. The westernized Muslim elite who had exploited the agency of the Ulema to realize their political ambitions did so at a heavy cost. The Islamic slogans raised by the Muslim League leaders, and the alliance effected with the Ulema to win their political battle boomranged on them after independence. The role of the Ulema and the influence they exercise in the contemporary Pakistan politics is too well known to need any elaboration.

50. Quoted in Faruqi, op. cit., p. 117; also see Haq Afzal: *Pakistan and Untouchability*, Lahore, 1941, p. 152.

CHAPTER FIVE

POST-INDEPENDENCE MUSLIM POLITICS

THE communal brand of politics of the post-Independence period clearly indicates that the leadership of the Muslim community is still in the old hands. Mr. M. A. Karandikar's exhaustive study of the post-partition Muslim politics provides sufficient evidence to conclude that the Muslim mind has not left its medieval groove yet. The low posture of Muslim communalism in the fifties should not blind us to the fact that Muslim communalism had not ended with the partition of the country. Immediately after the partition Qamar-ud-Din Khan, Lecturer, Aligarh University, wrote an article in the *Light,* Lahore, spelling out in detail the future course of action the Muslims of India should follow. He said "....it is nakedly clear that the fifty-million Muslims who have been forced to remain in Hindu India will have to fight another battle for their freedom. And when this second fight is staged anybody can easily guess that the geographical and strategical situation of Pakistan on the eastern and western frontiers of Hindustan will be of immense advantage to us. This is not to suggest that we shall invite Pakistan to invade Hindustan with our help but that the presence of Pakistan in our immediate vicinity will exert a great moral pressure on the Hindus and persuade them to give us a fair deal. Pakistan will soon become the member of the U.N.O. and, therefore, in future if any fundamental issue concerning the Muslims of Hindustan arises it can be put before the bar of world opinion by Pakistani representatives.... We can only assume that half the day is won. To win the other half we have to plan, organize and fight again.... We are still a nation, and a nation separate from the Hindus. Our population in Hindustan is greater than the population of any country in Europe except Russia. We will live here as a great and formidable nation.

We should henceforth change techniques of our work. We should work on the following lines :

(a) We should give up the political fight with the Hindus

and should not claim any representation in government, in the assemblies and in the services.... We should live here like Parsis and Christians. If any benefit came in our way we should profit by it, if none came, we should not hanker after it. This attitude is bound to neutralize the present hostility of the Hindus and curb down their existing aggressiveness.

(b) But for our preservation and defence in Hindustan it is necessary that we should concentrate in certain suitable and strategic areas.... For instance if the Muslims of the U.P. concentrate in western U.P. in a short time they can form a big majority zone and secede from Hindustan. Similarly the Muslims of northern Bihar can concentrate in the Purnea division and in normal course amalgamate with Eastern Pakistan...

(c) We should keep as intimate relations as possible with Pakistan and count on it for the maintenance of our important and central institutions of all kinds.

We should immediately take up our new position and set out to work up a new destiny—a destiny better and grander than the one we have only so lately achieved."[1]

Against the background of the communal holocaust that followed the creation of Pakistan, it was a wise policy to lie low. Once normal conditions were restored, the communal politics was resurrected again. Muslim leaders' acquiescence in Maulana Azad's advice to dissolve all specifically Muslim political organizations in 1947 was an outcome of expediency rather than conviction. Within two years of partition, the badly mutilated Muslim League was put of the crutches in Kerala again. Before the decade was over, the militant Muslim communal organizations had reappeared in many other states. It is noteworthy that these political developments had taken place at a time when the supreme leadership of the country was in the hands of a staunch secularist like Mr. Nehru, and the central cabinet included renowned Muslims like Maulana Azad and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai.

Two significant developments have exercised a descisive influence in setting the pattern of contemporary Muslim politics in India. The first is related to the political status of the

1. Quoted in *Organizer*, August 21, 1947.

Muslim elite. The second is the qualitative change in the status of the Muslim community as a minority.

Due to the partition and the various political and economic reforms introduced by the Government of India after it, the numerical strength and political influence of the Muslim elite has declined considerably at the national level. They do not possess a stable economic base any more. Their link with the rural Muslim masses which was never direct or strong, has been completely snapped by the abolition of zamindari. The Muslim politics as represented by them is absolutely an urban phenomenon and the sentiments they articulate do not in any way reflect the sentiments of the rural masses. It is no more possible for them to conduct the affairs of their community alone in an arbitrary fashion. Their leadership can survive only with the support of the educated middle classes and the Ulema who have a direct access to the masses. Compelled by their reduced numerical strength, the Muslim elite therefore rely more and more on these two important segments of their community. As a result of all this, in contrast to the past, the area of the elite has now become a little wider since the boundary line between the political aspirations of the upper classes and the educated middle classes does not exist any more. The economic opportunities open to them being the same, their interests no longer clash with each other. The political participation of the Muslim intellectuals, especially those connected with the academic life, has increased considerably. It is they who guide the Muslim politics at the national level and give sophisticated articulation to the political aspirations of the upper and middle classes of their community.

The dependence of the old elite on the educated middle classes and the Ulema puts certain restraints on them which they can defy only at the risk of being displaced. This is why even when the elite do not uphold the social and political ideologies of the Ulema they lack the courage to reject them openly. If they were to do so, they would destroy the franternity that exists between them and the Ulema, and in the process endanger their own leadership status. As a political necessity therefore the elite are now forced to adopt a public posture

of being orthodox Muslims. Their deliberately passive attitude towards the Ulema politics enables the Muslim elite to keep their leadership unimpaired. In other words, to satisfy their political ambition and to safeguard their own interests the Muslim elite is willing to keep their community in a state of social backwardness.

The inductment of the educated middle classes into the elite circle has not altered the complexion or direction of Muslim politics. The social and political attitudes of a large section of the middle-class Muslims are still shaped by the ideals of a bygone age. The overwhelming nostalgia for the glorious Islamic past with which their minds are wrapped up does not encourage them to seek new sources of inspiration or to chalk out new line of action.

What I am trying to emphasize is the coalescence of the two divergent ideologies represented by two different sections of the Muslim community—the Ulema and the westernized elite—that has taken place in the post-Independence India and is responsible for creating the present "Muslim opinion" in general. It is a meeting of two opposites—the modernists and the orthodox. The few Muslims who take up cudgels against this combined force find themselves completely ostracized. They are mercilessly branded as "traitors", "Hindus in disguise", and accused of being hungry for power. The lone voice of a Chagla, Hamid Dalwai, or Fyzee gets lost in the din of obscurantist preachings of the Ulema.

The second important development which we must keep in mind is the qualitative change in the character of the Muslim community as minority. The miracle performed by Mr. Jinnah of transforming a religious minority into a nation has complicated the problem of Muslim minority further. The minority status claimed by the Muslim community is three-dimensional. Religion makes the Muslims a religious minority, their claim on behalf of Urdu converts this minority into a religio-linguistic minority, and separate cultural identity so assiduously maintained by the Muslims provides them the basis to claim, directly or in an implied manner, the status of a national minority as well.

The political activities of the Muslim leaders after 1947

are directly related to this three-dimensional minority status of their community. The truncated size of their community has made it necessary for them to convert its diverse elements into a homogeneous whole. Otherwise they would not be in a position to strike a profitable bargain or act as a pressure group in national politics. As shown earlier, the communal solidarity enjoined by the Quran for the followers of Islam has never been a concrete reality in India. The real unity within the Muslim community can be created and maintained only through conscious endeavours. We should not be surprised therefore if deliberate efforts are made in that direction by the Muslim leaders. The process of Islamization that is going on vigorously amongst the Indian Muslims at present is an effort towards intra-communal unity. The emphasis on the Urdu language and the northern Indian Muslim culture have become two most important mediums to create the Islamic unity amongst Indian Muslims. The communal solidarity thus achieved is bound to unite the members of the Muslim community by separating them from the non-Muslims. By the same token, the Muslim segment of Indian society is bound to assume a separate social identity in every region making it difficult for the Muslims to forge permanent links with the majority community. The principles on which the members of the community should conduct their relations collectively with the non-Muslims are either expressed in pious platitudes for mutual love and co-operation or are defined in terms that cannot have any appeal for non-Muslims. While these platitudes come from the educated Muslims, the guideline which the Indian Muslims are supposed to follow in working out their relationship with the non-Muslims is provided mainly by the Ulema. The latter being incapable of visualizing human situation from a secular angle have come out with such politico-social plans which are thoroughly unrelated to the existing realities of 20th century Indian society. In the words of Nomani it is a question of faith for the Muslims "to believe in Islam as the ideal programme of life, both individual and collective. As against it all programmes are false and worthless. In consequence of this, as from humanitarian point of view, it would be their sincerest desire to see other commun-

ities also accepted it as their own and the holy law as revealed by God in His mercy reigned supreme all over the world."[2] The direct implication of this gigantic proselytizing programme is that there cannot be a relationship of equality, social or political, between the Muslims and the non-Muslims. As pronounced by Syed Hasan Ali "Islam recognizes only two broad divisions of mankind: one comprising those who are servants of God and the champions of Truth and the other comprising those who are the followers of Devil and the champions of Falsehood. Islam declares itself at war with all those who constitute the latter division, no matter what race or nationality they belong to. For, enmity and warfare in Islam are not governed by national or political considerations, but by considerations of truth and righteousness."[3] For reasons both mundane and spiritual, the educated Muslim elite and the Ulema are carving out a destiny for the Indian Muslim community which can never facilitate its social and political integration with the rest of the Indian population.

The attempts of the Muslim leaders to establish the three-dimensional status of their community has been responsible for keeping the vicious circle of Indian communalism spinning. The sharing of political power is still reckoned by them in communal terms. The idea is deliberately fostered that the distinct identity of the Muslim community would be in constant danger of annihilation if political power and separate treatment are denied to the Muslims. The political aspirations of the elite, therefore, have not travelled far from the aspirations of their predecessors of the 19th century under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad and Mohisn-ul-Mulk. Nor have they lost faith in the old strategies of power politics so successfully employed in the past. The nature of Muslim grievances and the methods of redress suggested by them remain the same. If they had questioned the bonafides of the Congress party earlier as a nationalist organization, they now question its bonafides in running a secular government. In 1887 Sir Syed Ahmad had accused the Congress of being a Hindu organiza-

2. Quoted in Karandikar, op. cit., p. 307.
3. Idem.

tion because the majority of its members were drawn from the Hindu community; in the sixties of the 20th century people like Salauddin Tayabji regard the Indian Government a symbol of Hindu power because according to him "the present state is pervaded by the Hindu religion by the fact that almost 90 per cent of the M.P.s are Hindus..."[4] The Muslim leaders remain perturbed at the economic backwardness of their community. Muslim poverty is directly traced to the discrimination practiced against them by the "Hindu communalists." The logical corollary of this accusation is that the Government of India is not considered to be a secular state. Further implications inherent in such accusations are that the Muslim culture and Islam are in danger. It is suggested that the Government of India can prove its secularism and give a sense of security to the Muslims only by introducing measures like reservation of seats in the government services, separate electorate, non-interference in all matters of socio-cultural significance to the Muslim community, and encouragement of Islamic learning. The demand for the separate electorate for the Muslims rests, according to Mr. M. Z. Sarfraz, on the fact that "Hindu legislators never care to ascertain Muslim grievances much less to find out ways and means to redress them. Muslim legislators are generally weak and helpless. They dare not speak in support of Muslim demands and grievances lest they should be termed communalists.....As a result of the system of joint electorates, the Muslims have suffered a lot during the last eighteen years. It is generally agreed amongst Muslims that the so-called Muslim ministers are proving dangerous to Muslim interests. For the sake of maintaining their position safe and secure, men like Chagla never hesitate to harm Muslim interests."[5] The same sentiment was expressed earlier by the Tamil Nadu Muslim League resolution of 1960, which demanded separate electorate or proportional representation in order to "ensure adequate and effective representation in the Parliament and the legislature so that their needs and grievances and views and opinions may be given expression by the representatives in whom they

4. *Radiance,* December 27, 1964.
5. Ibid., July 3, 1966

have confidence."[6] The ultimate solution to the minority problem as proposed by Jamaat-e-Islami is the establishment of an Islamic state in India or Islamization of India. The members of the Jamaat are convinced that "the dreams of national integration could never be achieved in India" without accepting "the Islamic way of life." They advocate the establishment of an Islamic state in India because "the majority has failed to end persecution and to uphold justice in the long period of seventeen years and has proved unworthy of heading the administration." "It is the Law of Allah" wrote the editor of Dawat in 1964 "not to allow unworthy persons to control the destiny of human beings but to entrust it to a group of fit persons.....We hope that the believers in Khuda and those who follow His teachings and declare His Prophet as the leader of humanity would be asked to shoulder the responsibility of administration..."[7] The less ambitious plans conceived to safeguard the Muslim interests include protection from international bodies like the UNO or support from the other Muslim countries of Asia like Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Pakistan.

Political questions are viewed by the Muslim leaders from a strictly Muslim standpoint even at the risk of undermining the larger interests of the nation as a whole. For instance, a week before the outbreak of the Indo-Pak war in 1965, Jamaat-e-Islami's Dawat published an interview of Moududi in which he had glorified the action of Pakistani infiltrators as a religious war. The Dawat editorial had fully supported the stand taken by Pakistan. The stand of Muslim Majlis was equally deplorable. Engrossed with the problems of their community, the Muslim leaders sometimes lose the capacity to approach some vital national problems in their correct perspective and seldom take up causes which do not directly involve the interest of their own community. When they point out the economic sufferings of their community they do not look upon it as a part of the poverty in which the millions of non-Muslims are also living. Their perspective has become so narrow that even

6. Karandikar, op. cit., p. 334.
7. Quoted in Karandikar, op. cit., pp. 335-36.

the crusade against poverty is launched by them on strictly communal lines.

The demand for granting Urdu the status of second official language is another example of the short-sightedness of the Muslim leaders. Irrespective of the regions to which they belong, they remain anxious to become a nationwide linguistic minority. This tendency is bound to prevent the Muslim community from integrating itself culturally and emotionally with other communities in the different regions of India. Similarly, the continuation of separate Muslim schools is nothing but a perpetuation of the old communal separatism under a linguistic label.

No one can fully deny the allegation of the Muslim leaders that secularism in India is still in an imperfect state. But can it become perfect only by according a special treatment to the Muslim minority? Can the Muslim leaders provide a rationale for their communal stand only by condemning the Government of India and all Indian political parties as Hindu organizations? As acknowledged by the editor of Jamaat-e-Islami's weekly *Radiance*....."Muslims of India are not prepared to give up their collective existence in different political parties. That is why many leaders of these parties go on ceaselessly accusing the Muslims of separatist tendencies."[8] The Muslim leaders consistently refuse to acknowledge that the Hindus can be secular minded or that there can be any section amongst the Hindus making sincere efforts to realize secular democratic ideals enshrined in the Indian Constitution. They brand all political parties whose membership is overwhelmingly Hindu as communal. Because almost 90 per cent of the M.P.s were Hindus, the Indian Parliament was declared a Hindu body. The fact is conveniently forgotten that the majority of the people of India are Hindus. The argument that the continuation of Muslim communalism is the best counterpoise to Hindu communalism is based on sheer miscalculation. The Muslim community must realize that its security and welfare depends entirely on the success of Indian secularism. Secularism is not the sole responsibility of the majority community. It must

8. Ibid., p. 333.

become the responsibility of the minority community as well.

The Government of India is condemned, and rightly so, for subscribing to the Hindu cultural institutions. The Muslim resentment against the performance of Hindu ceremonies at the inauguration of bridges etc. is perfectly just. But leaders like Mr. A. A. Soze who regarded the observance of Hindu rites during the state funeral of Jawaharlal Nehru as an infringement of secular principle would not regard the state funeral of Dr. Zakir Hussain accompanied by Islamic rites as a similar violation of true secularism. This double standard of judging secularism means only one thing: the Muslim leaders are more concerned with their communal interests than the promotion of true secularism. The secularism they advocate remains only a sham. According to them, the Government, instead of promoting secularism, "should make arrangement for compulsory religious education to the Muslims, banish all references to Hindu mythology from text-books, refrain from any association with Hindu ceremonies or anything which is likely to glorify paganism by way of erecting statues of mythological personalities, exempt the Muslims from interest on loan because usury is forbidden in Islam, arrange for separate 'halal' meat in all government canteens and boarding houses, give alequate representation to the Muslims in all walks of life—government services, elective bodies, ministries, nominated bodies, committees, industry, business etc.—make Urdu the national language and accord Urdu the status of second regional language in every state." Some of the Muslims continue to advise their co-religionists "to keep away from polytheists' customs and manners, educate themselves in religion.....They should not subscribe to the ideal of nationalism, materialism, socialism, democracy, sovereignty of the people etc., but should work for converting India into an ideal form of Government of the type of the holy Caliphate. Even in politics they should not associate themselves with non-Muslims and work for reintroduction of the system of separate electorates...."[10] However unrealistic these ambitions might be, the danger they pose to the healthy political growth of India cannot be overlooked.

9. See Karandikar, op. cit., p. 344.

10. Idem.

CHAPTER SIX

THE TRADITIONAL HINDU SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND THE NATURE OF HINDU-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN THE MEDIEVAL TIMES

THE hierarchical social structure of the Hindus as institutionalized in the caste-system is too well known to require an elaborate discussion here. Nor is the question, which social group constituted the elite amongst the Hindus, difficult to answer. We would, therefore, confine our comments only to those aspects of the Hindu society which throw some light on the cultural and socio-economic bases of the elite groups which had direct or indirect bearing on the nature of Hindu-Muslim relationship in the past. We would also take note of those traditions which in some way or other contributed to the growth of Hindu communalism in modern times. The nature of the medieval Hindu politics and political attitudes of the Hindu elite would also be taken into account to provide a background for the study of the birth and growth of Hindu communalism in the 19th century.

The atomization of the Hindu society into innumerable distinct units did not ever invalidate the original frame-work of the four Varnas. The concept of Varna acquired a functional value and remained indispensable for the maintenance of caste-hierarchy inasmuch as the social status, privileges, rights and obligations of each caste unit were determined according to the Varna. Detailed rules and regulations which defined the status of each caste left no scope for genuine social mobility. The different castes could occasionally change their position, but their status remained unalterable. A Hindu had no freedom to select his caste and status; he inherited it from his father and passed it on to his progeny making the caste order a completely closed system. Circulation of elite which operates in a class-society and keeps its dynamic spirit alive was almost absent in the Hindu society. Since *Varna-Vyavastha* had a

religious sanction for all Hindus, inequality and discrimination were intrinsic to the Hindu social order. The rights of the Brahmin and Kshatriya to guide Hindu society in religio-cultural and the political matters were unequivocally upheld and the social degradation of the Shudra was justified on religious and moral grounds.

The super-imposition of Varna norms and values on the hierarchical caste-system created a plurality of elite groups amongst the Hindus. The theory of divine origin of the four Varnas on which the colossal caste structure was based placed the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas in the category of the elite on a more or less permanent basis. The affairs of the Hindu community at the higher level were conducted entirely by the members of these two Varnas. Their close proximity in the social and political scale, however, did not breed any antipathy or social conflict. The spheres of activity and roles assigned to them by the Dharmasastras were so different in nature that they both could co-exist without jeopardising each other position. Nevertheless, the division of Hindu elite into two distinct groups of Brahmins and Kshatriyas did introduce an element of heterogeneity in the composition of the Hindu ruling classes.

The Hindu law as well as the Hindu religious tradition accorded the highest social status to the Brahmin because the Creator had created him "for the preservation of the Vedas, for the satisfaction of the gods and *pitrs*, for safeguarding of Dharma."[1] A Brahmin, therefore, by the very fact of his birth was "an object of honour even to the deities."[2] He was

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1. Kane, P.V.: *History of Dharmasastra*, Government Oriental Series, Class B, No. 6, Poona, 1941 (Vol. II, Part I), pp. 107-8.

2. Ibid. p. 108; The powerful kings of Vijaynagar acknowledged the superiority of the Brahmins. "These rulers identified and justified their own power in terms of the protection of Hindu institutions from Islam. The maintenance of the proper caste duties and relationships (Varnashrama Dharma) was frequently cited as the state policy in the Vijaynagar inscriptions..... On the basis of their continued support of Brahmins, religious pre-

the "highest being" living on this earth and a centre of reverence for all. The supreme status guaranteed to the Brahmin in the Sastras was acknowledged by all castes including the Kshatriyas. Commenting on the attitude of the Hindus towards the Brahmins, Manucci wrote in the 18th century: "The Brahmins, according to their (Hindu) view, are the noblest family of all mankind and the most venerated, not merely as superiors, but as gods."[3] The reverence shown by the Hindus to the Brahmin was matched by their contempt for the Shudra. Social distance that separated the Brahmin from other twice-born castes was more or less ceremonial and ritualistic. But the distance which separated the upper castes from the Shudras, especially the untouchables, amounted to a total social boycott of the latter.

Medieval commentators like Medhatithi and Vijnaneshwar had reiterated the laws laid down by the ancient authorities with regard to the Shudras. The lowest of the Shudra, the untouchable, had no right to build his dwelling in the Agraharam or enter the house of a caste Hindu. If a Chandal came nearer to the caste Hindu than the length of a cow's tail, the latter had to purify himself by taking a bath. During the regime of the Peshwas, Mahars were allowed to enter the city of Poona at fixed hours so that their shadow might not pollute the caste Hindus. Drinking of water from the well or vessel of the untouchable, or eating their food was forbidden for the twice-born castes. Any one who committed such mistakes had to undergo specially devised penances to regain his lost purity. The harsh reality of untouchables' life has been described in detail by Abbe Dubois who writes: "The contempt and aversion with which the other castes—and particularly the Brahmins—regard these unfortunate people are carried to such an extent that in many places their presence, or even their foot-prints, are considered sufficient to defile the whole neigh-

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rogatives and high ritual rank—they won recognition from the Brahmins to their own ascendant military and political power." Burt Stein quoted in Srinivas, M.N.: *Social Change in Modern India*, Delhi, p. 28, 1966.

3. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 43.

bourhood. They are forbidden to cross a street in which Brahmins are living.....Any one who has been touched, whether inadvertently or purposely, by a Pariah is defiled by that single act, and may hold no communication with any person whatsoever until he has been purified by bathing, or by other ceremonies more or less important according to the custom of his caste."[4] "However, notwithstanding the miserable condition of these wretched Parials, they are never heard to murmur, or to complain of their low caste. Still less do they ever dream of trying to improve their lot, by combining together ,and forcing the other classes to treat them with that common respect which one man owes to another. The idea that he was born in subjection to the other castes is so ingrained in his mind that it never occurs to the Pariah to think that his fate is anything but irrevocable."[5] Hindu society had left no route for the untouchables to escape from the inhuman disabilities which the accident of birth imposed on them. The theory of Karma proved an effective psychological weapon to individualise the social degradation and economic misery of the Shudra.

Although the caste cannot be equated with class, a fusion of the two has not been a rare occurrence in the Hindu society. Hierarchy of caste would not have endured for centuries without being buttressed by an inequitous economic structure. It is true that occupations reserved for the upper castes did not always yield high income returns. Many professions, though highly profitable, were strictly forbidden for the upper castes. Nevertheless, the higher social status accorded to the members

4. Dubois, op. cit., p. 49-50, also Al Beruni, op. cit., p. 101.

5. Dubois, op. cit., p. 51; Commenting on the Hindu caste-system Manucci wrote: "What is to be wondered at is that they (untouchables) are not allowed either to enter the temples or to draw water from the wells used by the other castes." op. cit., Vol. III, p. 34; also see Blunt, op. cit., pp. 332-33; Hazari : *I was an Outcaste*, New Delhi, 1951; Keer, *Life and Mission of Dr. Ambedkar*, 2nd ed., Bombay, 1962; Carstairs, G. Morris: *The Twice Born*, London, 1963, pp. 104-5, 124, 144; Srinivas, op. cit., pp. 15, 17, 18.

of the twice-born castes gave them access to various advantageous professions unavailable to the Shudra. They were not condemned to one particular occupation for the whole life as was the case with the lower castes. If a Brahmin found it difficult to sustain himself by following the prescribed mode of living, viz. teaching or officiating as a priest, he was free to choose other profitable and prestigeous professions. Only a small section of the Brahmins could remain contented with the uneconomical pursuits; many of them preferred to serve as administrators or soldiers. Commenting on the people of Maharashtra, Ibn Batuta had put Brahmins in the category of the nobles alongside the Kshatriyas. Similar latitude was enjoyed by other upper castes as well. But such freedom was totally denied to the Shudras. Under no circumstances could they encroach upon the professions allotted to the higher Varnas.[6]

The unchanging division of labour enforced under the Varna-oriented caste-system established a static and permanent pattern of income distribution. While the major share of wealth was absorbed by the higher castes, the Shudras remained condemned to a constant state of poverty. Observations made by Abbe Dubois throw great light on the economic mechanism of the traditional Hindu society. He writes: "Throughout the whole of India the Pariahs are looked down upon as slaves by other castes, and are treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere they are allowed to cultivate the soil for their own benefit, but are obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes, who, in return for a minimum wage, exact the hardest tasks from them."[7]

If national and international trade and money-lending were the safe preserve of the Vaishya castes, land was owned or controlled by the Kshatriyas or Brahmins. Most of the *zamindars* and *rajas* mentioned in the medieval Persian chronicles were members of these two castes. It is not implied here that

6. Kane, op. cit., pp. 18, 19, 122 to 125; Ibn Batuta, op. cit., pp. 191, 234.

7. Dubois, op. cit., p. 51.

there was any organized aristocracy of wealth at the upper-caste level. We are merely trying to stress that by minimising competition through caste rules and regulations, and by classifying professions according to the notion of purity and impurity, an economic system was evolved which proved disadvantageous to the lower sections of the society. Brahmins, the highest Varna, were not always affluent. But even in a state of utmost economic deprivation, a Brahmin did not stand at par with a poor Shudra.[8] Since it was the exclusive burden of the Brahmin to minister to the religious needs of the community, all members including the king, were under obligation to keep him above the line of abject poverty. There is enough epigraphical data to suggest that the medieval Hindu kings did not ignore their duty towards the Brahmins and from time to time granted them large tracts of land, free of all taxes. Whenever taxes were levied on them they were much lighter than those paid by the low-caste people.[9]

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8. Abbe Dubois noticed the presence of the Brahmins (in South India) in various departments of the East India Company's government. He commented: "Brahmins have....been....clever enough to work their way into favour with the great European power that now governs India. They occupy the highest and most lucrative posts in the different administrative boards and Government offices, as well as in the judicial courts of the various districts. In fact there is no branch of public administration in which Brahmins have not made themselves indispensable. Thus it is nearly always Brahmins who hold the posts of sub-collectors of revenue, writers, treasurers, book-keepers & c...." op. cit., pp. 291-92; Also see Sharma, R. S.: *Shudras in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1958, chap. IV, pp. 244 to 249, 254, 267; Ghurye, G.S.: *Caste and Race in India*, Bombay, 1969, chaps. II, IX, XI; Saletore, B.A.: *Social and Political Life in Vijaynagar Empire*, Madras, 1934, pp. 241 to 243; Krishnamurthi, S.R.: *A Study of the Cultural Development in the Chola Period*, Annamalai, 1966, pp. 145-46; Terry, Edmond: *A Voyage to East India*, London, 1777, p. 329; Bernier, op. cit., p. 333; Manucci, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 34, 35, 43; Ep. Ind., XX, p. 128; See p. 124, I, p. 146.

9. Karembelkar, V. W.: *Select Sanskrit Inscriptions*, Nagpur, 1959; see Paithan Plates of the Yadava King Ramchandra, also pp. 48, 53, 58; Uppadhaya, V.: *A Study of Ancient Indian Inscriptions*. Delhi, 1961, Copper Plate of Madhava (western Gangeya kings),

The socio-economic inequalities that separated the twice-born from the Shudra were sharpened by the different pattern of religio-cultural orientation laid down in the Hindu law. Knowledge was the monopoly of the Brahmins. Brahmins, who served as the custodians of Hindu culture were "niggardly in communicating" their knowledge to the other castes.[10] Elaborate precautions were taken to save the Vedic tradition from getting polluted at the hands of the Shudra. He was not considered eligible either to perform the Vedic rites or "acquire Brahmvidya based upon the study of Veda. The Hindu society allowed him access only to that knowledge which could be derived from the Puranas and Itihasa. But even these he could not explore on his own. He had to get them read by a Brahmin. The rites which the Shudras were allowed to perform were those which came under Purata Dharma. They could perform *vratas, mahadana* and *pryaschitta* but without *homa* or *japa*."[11] Since the Hindu Dharmasastras made no provision for the education of the Shudras as they had done in case of the other Varnas, the Shudra was systematically denied all opportunities to cultivate a sophisticated awareness of the great culture of his community. Hence the apparent unity of the Hindu culture could never develop the necessary vitality at all levels of Hindu society. It remained a conjunction of separate layers which had independent existence of their own, and the bottom layer remained qualitatively different from those that rested upon it.[12]

Kamanli Inscription of Govind Chandra of Garwal, Parmar King Bhoja's Vamswar Inscription, pp. 135-36, 175-76, 180; Gupta, K.K.: *Copper Plate of Sylhet*, Sylhet, 1967, Nidhanpur Copper Plates of Bhaskarvarman, Paschimbhag Copper Plate, Kalupur Copper Plate of Samanta Marundranathabhattarka, pp. 19, 21, 61, 75, 93; EI., XIV, p. 196; EI., IV, pp. 128-29; EI., XVII, pp. 218 to 224; EI., IV, pp. 101 to 103; EI, VII, pp. 104 to 109, 152-53; EI., XXII, pp. 104 to 109, 152-53; pp. 216-20; EI., XXIV, pp.291-95; EI., XXXI, p. 127; EI., I, p. 146.

10. Kane, op. cit., pp. 155-56.

11. Ibid., pp. 156-57.

12. Dubois, op. cit., pp. 22, 300 to 305; Crooke, op. cit., p. 242 to 248; Cohn, Bernard: *Changing Tradition of A Low Caste*, in

Being teachers and acknowledged guides of the Hindu community it were the Brahmins who were the most conscious of the separate cultural identity of their community. The Hindu cultural awareness that existed at the highest point of their social pyramid was quite vague and diffused at the ground level. The sense of community that characterised the upper-caste Hindus did not encompass all section of the Hindu society. The culture of the masses was tolerated but never fully integrated with "the high culture". For example, although the Hindu upper castes acknowledged the saintliness of certain illustrious men of the Shudra castes, the religio-social philosophy preached by the latter did not extend beyond the low-caste groups such as the Chamars and Julahas. Acceptance of certain common beliefs did introduce some amount of homogeneity in the Hindu society, but it was not deep enough to generate forces which could mobilise the combined strength of a community to assert itself to gain political ends.

So far, we have merely analysed the characteristic features of the elite and non-elite groups amongst the Hindus with the sole purpose of evaluating the nature and extent of heterogeneity which, in spite of unity of religious beliefs, was deep enough to keep their society perpetually bereft of a collective spirit. Now we would try to assess the impact of new norms and values introduced by Muslim culture in the Indian society; and the extent to which they re-fashioned social institutions and cultural patterns of the Hindus both at the mass and elite levels. An enquiry in this direction would help us in measuring the degree of cordiality and antipathy of the Hindus towards the Muslims and the areas where communal considerations were rendered insignificant on account of secular factors.

The military and political discomfiture of the Hindus at the hands of the Muslims did not disturb their age-old customs and social institutions in any substantial manner. Since the Muslim civil law could not be applied to the non-Muslims, the

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Milton Singer, op. cit., pp. 207-8; Gough, Kathleen, op cit., pp. 53, 54; Betteille, A.: *Caste: Old and New*, Bombay, 1969, pp. 90. 91, 101; Ray Chaudhary, op. cit., p. 168; Bernier, op. cit., pp. 331 to 340.

Hindus continued to be governed by their existent customs and the rules of their Sastras. The principles of social equality preached by Islam made no dent in the Hindu caste structure. In fact, the Muslim community itself succumbed to the Hindu influence in India and evolved its own pattern of social divisions. In recruiting the Hindu to the administrative services of the State, the Muslim government took full cognizance of the caste factor, and conferred high offices exclusively on the upper-caste Hindus. We do not find a single example where the Sultan or the Emperor appointed a low-caste Hindu to any high office.

Social dealings of the Hindu upper castes were strictly regulated by caste notions of purity and impurity. In this respect they made no concessions even in regard to the inter-caste relations within their own community. It was too much to expect that these Hindus would socialize freely with the Muslims who belonged to a different religion and ate beef. The marriage of Rajput princesses with Mughal princes did not herald any change in the attitude of the Hindus in this respect for these were part of political agreement the Rajput *rajas* entered to save their kingdoms; they had no bearing on the social relations between the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindu women married to the Muslims were treated as out-castes by their own people. "Hindu wives of the Muslims were all dead to the family of their fathers for all practical purposes. They could not go back to their fathers, nor were there any social relations between the two families."[13] The social distance maintained by the Hindus was noticed by Ibn Batuta in the 14th century. Describing the arrangements for the travellers on the national highways, he wrote: "At each shed (at the road side) there is a well for drinking and an infidel who is in charge of it. If the traveller is an infidel he gives him water in vessels; if he is a Muslim he pours the water into his hands, continuing to do so until he signs him to stop."[14] He added further, "it is the custom of the infidel in the Mulyabar lands

13. Roy Chaudhary, M.L.: *Din-i-Illahi*, 2nd ed., Calcutta, 1952, p. 87.
14. Ibn Batuta, op. cit., p. 231.

that no Muslim may enter their houses or eat from their vessels; if they do so, they break the vessels or give them to the Muslims."[15] Things did not change much when Abbe Dubois visited South India in the 19th century.

But communication between the two communities did take place on the cultural level. This was noticeable in both religious and secular areas in the medieval context. Some of the religious cults which flourished amongst the low-caste Hindus during the 15th and 16th centuries in northern and eastern India leaned heavily on Islam. But it must be emphasized here that the influence of Islam on religious practices and beliefs of the Hindus, barring a few exceptions, was marginal and was confined to the lower levels of the society. None of the medieval Hindu religious movements, whether monistic or monotheistic, owed their origin to the teachings of the Quran as such. Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and the saints of Nirguna school represented three different traditions of Hindu thought which had influenced each other and run on parallel lines for centuries before the Turkish conquest of India. Kabir and Nanak whose names are often connected with Sufi thought had a long chain of predecessors in the Siddhas and Yogis of Natha cult.[16] It was their concept of God and Guru worship which the medieval saints made their own and which bore striking resemblance to the religious ideals upheld by the Sufis. The Sufis, therefore, no doubt had an easy rapport with these saints, but the fact remains that the latter were thoroughly rooted in the Indian religious tradition. Like the salvation religion of the Sufis, it was meant for all irrepect-

15. Idem., Things had not changed much when Abbe Dubois visited South India in the 19th century. According to Abbe Dubois the only motive behind social intolerance of the Brahmins was "to secure themselves from the approach of men who, from the way in which they live and from the clothes they wear, are in their eyes in a perpetual state of defilement." op. cit., p. 302.

16. Dasgupta, S.N.: *History of Indian Philosophy*, 2 vols., Reprinted, London, 1952, 1957, chap., VII, X, pp. 420 to 439, 461, 474 to 489, Vol. I.; chap. XII, XIV, pp. 13 to 36, 58 to 73, 171 to 189, vol. II; Macleod, op. cit., pp. 158 to 161; Dasgupta, S. B., op. cit., pp. 61 to 75.

ive of caste and creed, and like the Sufis, their popularity was confined mainly to the low-caste people.

On the secular plain, the ideas and practices pertaining to the two cultures were transmitted to each other under the patronage of the Sultans and Emperors, thus leading to some cultural synthesis. New fruitful experiments were made in the field of painting, architecture, and music. New items of luxury and new modes of entertainment came into vogue in the Hindu society. A class of Hindus developed whose proficiency in Persian could successfully compete with that of the Muslims. Administrative machinery evolved by the Mughals was imitated by the Hindu chiefs, particularly the Marathas. But these cultural traditions in secular life should not encourage us to jump to the hasty conclusion that this resulted in the shaping of a common Indian culture. What is so often described as the "Hindustani culture" in this context was purely a North Indian phenomenon; it did not include the vast region of Peninsular India in its orbit. Nor could it become a heritage of the common masses; at best it was a cultural pattern followed by the ruling classes. The poor peasants and artisans of India had no financial means to make this cultural pattern an integral part of their life; they could dream of perfumes, music, palatial houses and clothes embroidered in gold enjoyed by the *rajas* and *mansabars,* but could not make them a part of their lives. Furthermore, even amongst the North Indian Hindus the Muslim cultural elements were absorbed only by certain select social groups, viz. Rajputs and Kayasthas.

The culture of the most important group of the Hindus, the Brahmins, remained immune to these influences. The Brahmanic mode of life, language and dress did not betray any influence of Islam. As noted by Bernier, the language cultivated by "the Pandets" was Sanskrit "totally different" from that which was "ordinarily spoken in Hindostan."[17] For the Hindus the centre of culture was not at Delhi but at Kashi, Mathura, Nasik and Kanchi, which were the citadels of Brahmanic tradition. As long as the Brahmins continued to main-

17. Bernier, op. cit., p. 335.

tain the separate identity of the Hindu culture, the cultural differences between the Hindus and the Muslims could not be wiped out since it was they, and not the Kayasthas or Rajputs, who served as the model for the Hindu masses. Even in the case of the Rajput princes, the new cultural pattern was not adopted in *toto*. It was accepted only in its superficiality and the hard core of their culture was left untouched. For example, just receiving the *Khillat* from the Muslim Emperor did not legitimize the succession of a Rajput prince; it had to be followed by a proper *Rajyabhishek* conducted by the Brahmins. Manucci who spent years in the Mughal camp, while describing the Rajput *rajas* did not forget to mention that they preserved "all ancient customs."[18]

The cultural insularity of the Brahmins and the social intolerance of the upper-caste Hindus has often been attributed to the advent of Islam and is explained as a defence mechanism of the Hindus against the proselytizing zeal of the Muslims. But a cursory glance at the Indian history reveals that a certain amount of cultural exclusiveness and social intolerance had always characterized the Hindu society with regard to the non-Hindus. The inclusion of the outside groups within the fold of Hindu society depended very much on the co-operation of the Brahmins. The outside elements could not become a legitimate part of the Hindu society without their approval. It is true that the Brahmins never advocated the hunt of the heretics and massacre of the non-believers, allowing great latitude for differences of ideas and beliefs. But this intellectual tolerance of outside groups was always accompanied by an arrogant attitude and an attempt at exclusiveness.

The asimilation of many foreign elements in Hindu society is often cited as a proof of the socio-cultural tolerance of the Hindus, scarcely remembering that the "hordes of barbarians" like the Huns and Scythians etc. did not possess a developed culture of their own—a fact which greatly facilitated their acculturation and backdoor entrance into the Hindu community. It was tolerance indeed, but on Hindu terms.

18. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 412.

The Brahmins had to declare the leaders of the victorious hordes as Kshatriyas. New rituals were contrived to accommodate them in the elaborately graded Hindu social hierarchy.[19] The non-Hindu rulers, in return for this social elevation and legitimization of their political authority, had to acquiesce in the four-fold division of the Hindu society and bestow honour upon the Brahmins.[20] The remaining members of their racial group, however, swelled the ranks of the Shudras, and were thus lost permanently in the oblivion of history. If capacity to assimilate is a positive sign of social and cultural tolerance, then the same can also be said of the early medieval culture of Europe and some other countries in Asia. Huns, Scythians etc. traversed a long distance before reaching India, but in no country through which they passed and settled down, do they exist as a distinguishable social or racial group. All highly developed cultures possess some kind of mechanism to assimilate inferior cultures. The Hindus cannot claim to be unique in this respect. The price demanded for assimilation or Indianisation was "Sanskritisation". Those who rejected the norms of "Sanskritisation" were generally abandoned as *mlechchas*.[21]

The Hindu society could not adjust itself with Islam without a drastic revision of the norms which governed the social conduct of its members. The old technique of assimilation of outside groups through the gradual process of "Sanskritisation" had lost its relevance in the new context. The problem now

19. See Pandey, R.B.: *Historical and Literary Inscriptions*, Benares, 1962, *Nasik Cave Inscription of Usavdatta*, p. 57; Upadhyay, op. cit., *Eran Boar Inscription of Torman, Gwalior Inscription of Mihirkula*, pp. 107-8; Kosambi, D.D.: *Culture and Civilization of Ancient India*, London, 1965, p. 171.

20. EI., Vol. VII, pp. 13 to 55; EI., Vol. VIII, p. 90; p. 123, 124 EI., Vol. XVIII, p. 325.

21. Meaning of the word "Mlechcha" as given in the Sanskrit Dictionary is:
1. "a barbarian, a non-Aryan (one not speaking the Sanskrit language, or not conforming to Hindu or Aryan institutions); 2. a foreigner in general, an outcaste, a very low man." *Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Vol. II, p. 1296.

was to assimilate a people who were not willing to sacrifice their separate identity and culture. Since the "Hindu genius" failed to devise a formula to meet this situation, it could not incorporate the Muslims into the Hindu society. Instead, the Hindus adopted a course of isolation, leaving the problem unsolved. The epithet *mlechcha* hurled at the Muslims constantly, irrespective of their foreign or Indian origin, is a clear indication of this. The Hindu attitude as observed by Al Beruni remained the same throughout the medieval period: "On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves; at the utmost, they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property on religious controversy. On the contrary, all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them, against all foreigners. They call them *mlechcha,* i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage or any other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them because thereby, they think, they would be polluted."[22]

Thus, in spite of mutual give and take for centuries, the elite of the two communities never allowed their separate cultural identities to be compromised.[23] The assimilation of alien elements in their way of life did not obliterate their distinguishing characteristics. However, this keen awareness of separate cultural identities of the Hindu and Muslim elite did not prevent them from striking political bargains with each other to maintain their position of power. An analysis of the politics of the Hindu elite and their political attitudes undertaken in the following pages would make this point amply clear.

The political relationship between the ruling classes of the two communities in the medieval times does not present a consistent or uniform pattern of either enmity or amity. Since the relationship between the two was formed through pressure from

22. Al Beruni, op. cit., p. 19; Rizvi, S.A.A.: *The History of the Tughlaqs,* Part II (Barani), Aligarh, 1957, pp. 150-51.

23. If the nobles wore the same type of Angrakha, it had to be tied in a different manner to distinguish the Hindu from the Muslim; the same applied to various types of head-gears that adorned their heads. These social and cultural attitudes of the elite put a communal stamp even on the things purely secular.

above and submission or obedience from below, it was always of an "asymmetrical" nature. The attitude of the Hindu elite towards the ruling Muslim power was rather ambivalent. In spite of their submission to Muslim imperialism in general, their latent antagonism often flared up whenever the central power showed signs of weakness leading sometimes to open rebellion. Local autonomy exercised by the members of the Hindu ruling class helped the continuation of the asymmetrical pattern of power distribution which prevailed throughout the Muslim rule from the 13th to the 18th century. The acceptance of the sovereignty of the Muslim rulers did not diminish the authority or prestige of the Hindu *rajas* and *zamindars* in the eyes of their subjects. In other words, pressures from above did not obliterate their local hold. The autonomous status enjoyed by the Hindu power elite within the imperial framework had three distinct consequences at the all-India level. It kept (i) the Hindu power elite perpetually disunited; (ii) the political perspective of the masses locally oriented; and (iii) the dynamics of political change within the Hindu community non-operative. Members of one particular group or caste acquired an inflexible position of power in every region. In particular, the Rajputs were allowed to retain their rights to wield political authority amongst the Hindus; the establishment of Muslim imperialism did not change their position within their own community.[24]

The numerous wars waged by the Rajput princes against the Muslim conquerors are sometimes interpreted as national and communal resistance put up by the Hindus to defend the honour of their country and religion. A critical appraisal of the medieval Rajput politics does not warrant such a romantic conclusion. The manner and course of Rajput struggle against Muslim powers does not present any communal or national dimension. Political opportunism, preservation of personal

24. The policy of the Imperial government under the Mughals was elite oriented. Up to the time of Shahjahan, with the exception of a few *Khatris* and *Marathas*, almost all Hindu recruits in the rank of *mansabdars* were Rajputs.

honour and the strong desire for self-survival were the only factors which usually inspired the Rajput rulers to take up arms in defence of their own kingdoms.

The true nature of the aims and aspirations of the Rajputs is more clearly revealed by the fact that the compromises which they made with their Muslim opponents were more frequent than the wars they waged to retain or regain their territorial possessions. If the right to retain their kingdoms was guaranteed, they extended their full co-operation to the Muslim rulers, and even gave them assistance to suppress the more independent-minded Rajput compatriots.[25] To credit the Rajput princes with any communal or national awareness is a travesty of truth. Even at the most critical juncture of their history, their mutual dissensions and jealousies never came to an end. The number of wars they waged against each other far exceeded the ones they waged against their Muslim rivals. These mutual jealousies of the Rajput princes made them an easy prey to the astute diplomacy of the Mughal Emperors. Referring to the attitude of the Rajputs, Manucci wrote: "The Moghul draws his profit from their barbarous ways, and out of policy reinforces them when it suits him and employ them to destory each other. If they were only united among themselves, the Rana (Raja of Udaipur) and the Rathors, Kachhwahas and Bundelhas, they could easily expel the Moguls from Hindustan."[26]

To settle their dynastic rivalries or mutual disputes, the Rajputs very often sought the intervention of their Muslim neighbours. For example, to push forward the claims of her

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25. See Tod: *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 2 Vols., London, 1914; Bannerjee, op. cit., 86, 90, 94; Ray, B.C.: *Orissa Under the Marathas*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 22 to 25: Mukhopadyay, op. cit., pp. 31, 68; *Indian History Proceedings*, 1945, p. 109 to 115; Misra, S. C.: *Rise of Muslim Power* etc., op. cit., p. 211; Ahmad, op. cit., p. 93; Bhargawa, U.S.: *Marwar and Mughal Empire*, Delhi, 1966, pp. 60 to 66, 76, 129, 133; Sharma, Dasrath: *Early Chauhana Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 111, 151, 163; Sharma, G.N.: *Mewar and the Mughal Emperors*, Agra, 1962, pp. 18 to 20, 77; *Riyazus Salatin*, pp. 342 to 346, 353.

26. Manucci, op. cit., Vol., II, p. 414.

two sons, Uda and Vikram, Rani Karmeti (widow of Rana Sanga) had entered into a secret communication with Babur. The Mughal Emperor was promised Ranthombore in exchange of Bayana and many other precious gifts besides.[27] After the death of Babur, the Rani had sent her envoy to Humayun soliciting his help against her opponents. Nar Singh Deo (nephew of Rana Sanga) and other prominent *jagirdars,* on the other hand, approached Bahadur Shah of Gujarat inviting him to attack Chittore. Rajput history is replete with such instances. During the long resistance put up by Rana Pratap against Mughal imperialism, most of the Rajput princes, including his own brother, had sided with the Mughal Emperor. The defence of Mewar and the honour of the Sisodias were not identified with the defence of a nation and culture even by the people of Rajputana. Thirty years of warfare for the liberation of Marwar during the reign of Aurangzeb had ended, like many other wars fought by the Rajput rulers, in a compromise with the imperial power. Durga Das, the hero of Marwar, considered himself greatly honoured when he was made a Mughal *mansabdar* after the Rajput defeat; and his royal ward Ajit Singh had written to Aurangzeb asking for financial help and the restoration of his jagir.

Thus the betrayal of the so-called "national cause" by Raja Jaichand of Kannauj in the 12th century was not an isolated phenomenon. It was a common and persistent feature of Rajput politics throughout the history of Muslim rule in India. In fact, it was the co-operation from the Hindu ruling classes which made the success of foreign armies possible and easy on the Indian soil. If Ramchandra Yadav of Deogiri had acted as the guide of the Muslim armies led by the Khiljis in the Deccan in the 14th century, Rana Sanga of Mewar had sent an invitation to the Muslim, Babur, to invade India in the 16th century. When the plan of Rana Sanga to "re-establish Hindu rule over Delhi" with the help of Babur went away, he had quickly aligned himself with the Muslims, Mahmud Lodi and Hasan Khan Mewati.[28] The Rajput *rajas* who had flocked

27. Sharma, G.N., op. cit., pp. 43, 44.

to the standard of the Rana on the battle field of Khandwa had not done so to defend the honour of their culture and religion but only to protect their own interests. The moment Rana Sanga lost the day at Khandwa, his Rajput allies got dispersed, leaving Rajputana at the mercy of the foreign conqueror.

The tradition of opportunistic and non-communal politics of the Hindu elite persisted even after the emergence of new Hindu power groups like the Jats and the Marathas in the 18th century. The project of *Mulkgiri* which the Marathas adopted on an all-India scale under the leadership of the Peshwas had no ideological basis. Their motivation was purely financial.[29] Burnt noses, ruined crops and the killing of hundreds of innocent Hindus in Bengal, were some of the results of the so-called Hindu championship assumed by the Marathas.[30] The Maratha Sardars did not desist from fighting against each other and making pacts with their erstwhile enemies at Delhi or other parts of the empire. Maratha horses had crossed the Narmada for no better reasons than those which led Raghunath Rao to

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28. Beveridge, A.S.: *Memoirs of Babur (Tujuk-Baburi)*, Delhi, 1970 (Reprint), Vol. II, p. 529.

29. The Peshwa requested Dattoji to conquer Bengal and Bihar and demand 50 lacs from Shujaudaulah before making him Wazir, so that he could clear his debt of one crore of Rupees. He wrote: "Lead an expedition into Bengal and Bihar; realize vast sums of money there for repaying my debts." Sarkar, J.N.: *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. II, pp. 164 to 166; Balaji marched to Bengal to help Alivardi Khan against Raghuji Bhonsle. In return of 22 lacs of rupees as *Chauth*, the Peshwa promised to "accommodate matters" with Raghuji in such a manner that he might not invade Bengal in future. Srivastava, op. cit., pp. 66 to 68.

30. Describing the disaster caused by the Maratha raids, poet Gangaram of Bengal wrote: "The Brahmins and Pandits ran away with their books, the sonar (goldsmith) benias with their weights and measures, the Gandhvaaniks (grocers-perfumers) and the Kanasaris (bell-metal workers) after closing their shops, the black smiths and potters with their implements, the fishermen with their nets and ropes, and the Sankh-vaniks (conch-dealers) with their articles..... The Shaikhs and Sayyids, the Mughals and Pathans ran out of their villages...." Quoted in K. K. Dutta, op. cit., pp. 57, 58.

the British camp in the later phase of Maratha history. Nor were the Jats very keen to protect the communal interests of the Hindus at the cost of their caste interests. Religion was too thin a veneer to hide or supersede the strong regional and caste flavour of the 18th century Hindu politics. The struggle of the Jats and Marathas could never assume the nature of a broad-based struggle of the Hindus to establish Hindu political power. When an overwhelming number of the Hindus did not enjoy the opportunity of political participation, their failure to identify themselves with the success of the new Hindu power groups was natural. The change in the status of the Hindu elite did relieve the common Hindus from the disabilities suffered in the past, but this did not ensure for them any new political benefits. The benefits of power remained restricted to certain groups and sections and were not enjoyed by the Hindu community as a whole. In the Jat state, the non-Jat Hindus could seldom enjoy a privileged position. Similarly, a non-Maratha Hindu could never aspire to occupy the office of the Peshwa or Pandit Pradhan in the Maratha state.

With the emergence of Hindu power groups in the 18th century, the Muslim elite were bound to lose their former position of political pre-eminence. It was this change of political scene which created an atmosphere of positive hostility between the elite of the two communities. There is enough evidence to suggest that the social relationship between the upper sections of the two communities had reached a breaking point in certain regions. How the changed political status of the Hindu elite gave birth to social and religious tensions as well can be gleaned from the words of Ali Mohammad Khan. Commenting on the evil consequence of Ajit Singh's appointment as the Subedar of Gujarat he wrote: "....Market of Islam became dull. Cow-slaughter was prohibited. Masjid became desolate and temples increased in splendour. During Holi, Muslims were subjected to injury, insult and disgrace and Hindus regarded this deed as virtue."[31] When famine broke in Gujarat, "the Marwaris enslaved many Muslim women and their child-

31. Ali, op. cit., p. 494.

ren belonging to noble and ignoble families by giving them bread.... They purified them by forcing them to eat cowdung and burning a few barley-grains over their heads in accordance with their faith. Having made them heretics, they sent them in hordes to Marwar. Rejoicing at their misfortune they used to say that many captives from Jodhpur were made Muslims during the regime of His Majesty Khuld Makan (Aurangzeb)."[82]

32. Idem. In words of Khafi Khan "after the death of Aurangzeb. Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur showed character by rebuilding the temples and destroying the mosques in his territory." These mosques had been built on the ruins of the temples destroyed at the orders of the Emperor. See Elliot and Dowson. Vol. VII. p. 446.

CHAPTER SEVEN

HINDU COMMUNALISM : ITS GENESIS AND GROWTH

THE past of India did neither reveal any trace of a united nation, nor project any image of a compact Hindu nation. The general social and intellectual awakening in the 19th century had impressed on the Hindus for the first time the importance of national solidarity. They were now inspired to translate their vague feelings of cultural identity as Indians into a living political reality. In their own interest as well as in the interest of the country, therefore, all Hindu leaders devoted themselves to the cause of national freedom and democracy. But in the midst of the growing nationalistic fervour, the formation of the All-India Muslim League and the Muslim demand for separate electorate with weightage delivered a rude shock to the Hindu leaders. The Muslim leadership was obviously determined to keep their community aloof from the mainstream of national politics.

It would not be an exaggeration to state that the Act of 1909 which granted separate electorate and weightage to the Muslims was directly responsible for the birth of organized communalism amongst the Hindus. The Congress which had stood for ideals of secularism and common nationhood got discredited in the eyes of one section of the Hindus. The wisdom of the Congress policy of putting the entire burden of national unity on the Hindus was questioned. The Congress leaders were accused of sacrificing the interest of the majority to placate the minority which had no intention of forging a common front for the national cause. It was felt that the Hindus should establish a separate organization to defend their "just rights". The Congress leaders had been propagating that national solidarity was indispensable for political freedom. However, as against this, the upper-class Muslims had demonstrated that communalism could be an alternative to national solidarity and nationalism. The success of the Muslim League in obtaining special status and

privileges for the Muslims without any agitation or struggle made communal politics an honourable and profitable profession. The advantage of the Muslim model of communalism over the Congress model of nationalism were too obvious to be ignored. Instead of agreeing to what they considered to be a surrender of their rights, one section of the Hindu elite chose to walk in the foot-steps of the Muslim communalists.

It was feared that the grant of separate electorate with weightage to the Muslims at a time when the right to vote was enjoyed only by the wealthy and the educated, would give the Muslims an edge over the Hindus. In every region the Muslims were to have more seats than they were entitled to by virtue of their actual number. Whereas, in general constituencies they voted side by side with the Hindus, they were to vote for their own members separately in wholly Muslim constituencies. The superiority which the Hindus had because of their numbers was thus rendered nugatory. Further, since the minority status of the Muslims was recognized on an all-India basis, the Hindu minorities in the Muslim majority areas were placed under extreme political pressure. They enjoyed neither the strength and security of a majority nor the protection and privileges which were being offered to the minority. The Hindus of the Muslim majority areas joined hands with the Hindus of those areas where the Muslims were a sizeable minority, but occupied a privileged position in arousing communal consciousness amongst the Hindus. Reacting to the separatist stand of the League leaders, Tej Bahadur Sapru wrote: "The last meeting of the All-India Moslim League (May 23, 1909) at Lucknow once again demonstrated the utter hollowness of all talk about compromise between the Hindus and Mohammedans in the matter of political representation..... *Will the Hindus even now awake to their sense of duty towards themselves,* towards their past, and towards their future? That is the question which seems to me ought to attract the notice of every Hindu who has got mind to think and courage to speak out. How long are we going to cry hoarse over the painful prospect of separation? And how do we propose to prevent separation? It seems to me that the Hindus should not trouble themselves about

separation. We in U. P. will be most affected by this new doctrine. *Will the Hindu aristocracy or to use the new official phrase 'the natural leaders of the people' now come forward and declare unequivocally what they and their fellow religionists think and feel about the matter? Will or will not they take a leaf out of the book of the Mohammedan aristocracy? Or are they 'leaders' only for the purpose of organizing demonstration of loyalty and leading deputations?*"[1]

The opinion of the U. P. leaders was shared by one section of the Hindus of Bengal who were equally exasperated at the Congress insistence on Hindu-Muslim unity as *sine quo non* for India's freedom. They posed the question "Is there any hope for Nationalism in the event of a misunderstanding between the Hindus and the Mussalmans?" Their answer was "Of course there is; we should like to work together. There is no question as to the greater strength of the rope that is made of double strand; but in the face of immense numerical preponderance enjoyed by one of the parties, it would be quite clear, even if the history of the past had not already elucidated it, that mutal cooperation of the two great sections of the Indian nation is only an advantage not a necessity to nationalism. Hindus are in no way inferior in prowess. The bravest race in India is Hindu not Mohammedans. We have the advantage in education. It is for the sake of Mohammedans themselves that we desire that nationality should be the common cause; not for nationality, which cannot ultimately lose whoever opposes it."[2] The editor of the Bengalee went to the extent of arguing that "*A Pan-Hindu League had become a necessity of the times, forced upon us by the circumstances which are not our creation*. If such an organization is started, we hope it will, its attitude will not be aggressive or militant. Defence not defiance be its motto. The great Hindu community has suffered through the want of such organizations, while others have enormously profited by it."[3]

But the Hindus of Bengal and U. P. were under no urgent

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1. *The Tribune*, March 3, 1909; Advocate, April 28, 1909.
2. *The Tribune*, October 9, 1909.
3. Idem.

compulsion to organize themselves into a community to fight for their political rights. Both had their own grounds for avoiding such extreme steps. The Bengali Hindus' interests could not be hurt much by the loss of a few seats or jobs. Being far ahead in education from the Hindus of adjoining provinces, viz. Assam, Orissa and Bihar, they had greater opportunities for finding jobs in other parts of the country. Neither in U. P. nor in Bengal was there any third competitor in the race to claim the privileges as was the case in the Punjab where the Sikh minority was not less influential than the Hindu. The hold of the Hindu *zamindars* in Bengal and the *taluqdars* in U. P. over the rural population was much stronger than that of the Hindu money-lenders in the Punjab. The division drawn between the agriculturists and non-agriculturists to build up the strength of the Muslim privileged classes in the Punjab could not be experimented in Bengal or U.P. Such administrative measures would have made the vocal Hindu elite more belligerent. The British Government had no intention of running that risk. The Hindus of the other provinces felt disturbed at the partisan policy of the Government, but being in overwhelming majority they did not suffer from any feeling of insecurity. They made verbal protests but did nothing to get the clauses of the Act of 1909 modified.

The mantle of organizing a Hindu communal movement fell on the Hindus of the Punjab. Betrayed by the Congress and convinced of the efficacy of the ideology and methods of the Muslim League, they launched a similar movement in defence of their interests *vis-a-vis* the Muslim majority of the province. From the time of its inception up to 1923, the Hindu communal movement remained essentially rooted in the Punjab. During this first phase it lacked a well defined ideology and a definite plan of action. It was more in the nature of a protest than a struggle. But the issues on which the protest was made and the manner in which it was made give us a fair idea of the real motives that lay behind the communal posture of the Punjabi Hindus.

Like the Muslim minority in U. P., the Hindus of the Punjab though small in number, dominated the economic and

political life of the province. There was vast economic disparity between the Hindus and the Muslims of the Punjab. Within 50 years of British rule a class of Hindu money-lenders had arisen in the Punjab which had enriched itself by exploiting the helpless peasantry, majority of whom were Muslims.[4] This class had produced, in the urban Punjab, a section, which came to occupy the key-positions in the administration.[5] In addition to this, the Hindus enjoyed a dominant position as financiers in the province. Even in the field of education the Hindu minority was far ahead of the Muslims. In 1900 about 16.37 per cent of the Hindu boys of school-going age were attending schools, while only 11.67 per cent of the Muslim boys of the same age group went to schools. In the higher educational institutions, the Muslim percentage was still less—the number of the Hindus being three times higher than that of the Muslims. The Hindus had thus become the power elite of the Punjab on account of these advantages. But their superior political and economic position was seriously endangered by the Muslim demand for a separate electorate with weightage. The Hindu minority of the Punjab had no hope of furthering its sectional interests through the national organization of the Congress. It had to take a communal stand to safeguard its interests.

Lala Lal Chand, one of the founder members of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, wrote a series of articles, entitled "Self-Abnegation in Politics", in which he explained the reasons why the Hindus should have an organization independent of the Congress, and with a different ideology. He regarded the Congress a "self-inflicted misfortune" of the Hindus.[6] In the name of national unity the Congress had consistently sacrificed the interests of the Hindus to appease the Muslims. He pointed out: "There is one thing that is strictly forbidden within the precincts of the Congress—it is the term 'Hindu'. Resolutions

4. Darling, M.L.: *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, London, 1925, pp. 19, 116-17.
5. *Punjab Civil Service List*, 1921.
6. Chand, Lala Lal: *Self-Abnegation in Politics*, 2nd edn., Lahore, 1938, p. 2; *The Punjabee*, July 1, 1909.

may be passed to favour purely Mohammedan interests but the Hindu is tabooed there."[7] Lala Lal Chand blamed the Congress for encouraging the Muslim aggressiveness and said: it "looks to be very height of folly and absurdity to go on crying for a united nation when one important community, by its words and actions, makes it persistently and absolutely clear that they do not desire nor seek for union.....The method of offering the other cheek for being slapped has now been tried over 20 years. There has been enough of coaxing and fawning, which, by giving undue importance to the other community, has begotten only insolence and impudence. May we not now try the counter-method and see its results? At least this is a method equally worth trying, and am sure we shall not thereby be worse off than we are."[8] He further added: "the self-negation in politics which the Hindu community has adopted to achieve the formation of an Indian nation is suicidal. I may be wrong in this diagnosis when set against a Gokhale or a Surendra Nath, but it is my sincere belief—and I mean to press it on the attention of the Hindu community—that they are proceeding on the wrong lines, and that self-effacement, whatever may be the reward for it, is not a desirable means or end."[9] What I want, therefore, is that some of the work attempted by the Congress be attempted by the Hindu community for itself within reasonable bound and untrammelled by any consideration whatever for the interests of the other community. I regard this as a gain itself."[10] Lala Lal Chand declared: "the ideal, the predominant factor, ought to be communal rather than geographical interests....Communal love, in fact, is the root of the majority of the sentiments which we love and cherish, not excluding even religion.... The idea is to love everything owned by the community. It may be religion, it may be a tract of the country, it may be a phase of civilization."[11]

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7. Chand, Idem, *The Punjabee*, July 8, 1909.
8. Chand, op. cit., p. 5.
9. Ibid., pp. 14-15.
10. Ibid., p. 101.
11. Ibid., p. 103.

Hindu interests could not be protected without mending or converting the Congress into a purely Hindu body. But "it is impracticable" Lala Lal Chand argued "to convert the present Congress into a Hindu Congress as that would mean not a mere change in the name but a change in the ideas. The difference, therefore, is not merely a difference of form or detail but a difference in root principle...A person who believes in the Indian ideal would subordinate the Hindu interests as of secondary importance; and this has actually happened in the conduct of the Congress leaders....Whereas those who believe in the Hindu ideal must subordinate the Indian as of secondary significance and lend their support to it so far only as the ideal does not militate against the real Hindu interests. Taking, therefore, our start from the standpoint I urge, our line of conduct is perfectly clear. We must organize political associations with the sole object of strengthening and advocating Hindu interests whether these be special or common."[12] "Weak and disunited we are and divided into various sects" he told his co-religionists in the Punjab, "but the remedy lies in bringing the sections on a common platform."[13] This would make them "realise that they are merely branches of the same stock and community, and not to lead them further astray and to teach them as if no such community exists or has a political status."[14] Particularly when *"the Mohammedan community is taking vigorous measures to assert and constitute its independent existence, it is our duty to do the same for the Hindus."*[15]

Thus was born, in 1907, the Punjab Hindu Sabha which specifically aimed at being "ardent and watchful in safeguarding the interests of the entire Hindu community."[16] Commenting on this new development in Indian politics the Indian Spectator wrote: "Moslem League has given rise to a Hindu League. It has seen the light in the Punjab where the Hindus

12. Ibid., p. 119-120, *The Punjabee*, July 22, 1909.
13. Ibid., p. 118.
14. Idem.
15. Ibid., p. 120.
16. *The Punjabee*, January 7, 1907 and September 28, 1909.

are in a minority, and it seems to have enlisted a few supporters in other provinces."[17]

It was natural for the Punjabi Hindus to pick up the issue of separate electorate with great enthusiasm. They strongly opposed the Government of India's decision to accord special status to the Muslims and declared it as an unjust, irrational, and injurious step for the healthy relationship between the two communities. Lala Lajpat Rai did not think that the interests of the Muslims differed from those of the Hindus. In a letter to the *Times,* London, he wrote : "I think it will be relevant to inquire on how many occasions within the last forty-seven years or so, since the Indian Council Act of 1861 came ino force, the Legislative Councils of India had to deal with questions exclusively or specifically affecting the Muslims of India as distinguished from their non-Muslim countrymen....I do not wish to say one unkind word in reply to the argument based upon the so-called historical and political importance of the Mohammedans of India, a vast majority of whom are only descendants of the Hindu converts, and are as much divided into castes and sub-castes as the Hindus. But does the All-India Muslim League seriously think that backwardness in education, want of organization, and want of enterprise are substantial grounds for claiming a larger representation than their numbers entitle them?"[18] Reflecting the sentiments of the Punjabi Hindus, the editor of the *Tribune* commented that the Muslims "were as unimportant or important as the other communities in this country. The Mohammedan power had almost vanished when the English appeared on the scene. Historically the English power had not succeeded to Mohammedan....The Sikhs, Marathas, and Rajputs are politically important, because they were holding power when the English came."[19] While Lala Lajpat Rai and others discussed the issue of separate electorate in broader terms, it was Lala Lal Chand who articulated the anger and frustration which the Hindu minority experienced in the Punjab. Condemning the partisan stand of the

17. *The Indian Spectator,* November 9, 1909.

18. *The Tribune,* February 19, 1909.

19. Ibid., February 24, 1909.

Government, Lala Lal Chand wrote: "The Secretary of State speaks of the importance of Muhammedans as a community in the U.P. in spite of their minor numerical strength, but he takes it for granted that the Hindu minority in the Punjab is of no importance against the Muhammedan majority so that according to the Secretary of State where the Muhammedans form a majority they must get a lion's share as a matter of course; and where they are in a minority, they will get it on the basis of their supposed importance."[20] Referring to the Hindus of the Punjab he pointed out: "Whether in riches, intelligence, or influence with the masses, the Hindus doubtless carry a greater prestige. The Hindu money-lender may be hated by some officials, but they are ignorant of the vast influence he possesses over the village folk, including the Muhammedans. He may be partially excluded from the village by the Land Alienation Act, but he is still there and cannot be entirely ousted. He has only to accommodate himself to his new environment but his influence is only extended and not curtailed by his inability to invest in land."[21] He asked the Government whether it was "consulting its own interests in declaring and acting upon the declaration that Muhammedans possess greater importance?"[22] Was "it not a suicidal policy to create a feeling of sullenness among the teeming millions of Hindus by telling them that they were of less importance?"[23]

The members of the Hindu Sabha called a meeting at Lahore on March 21, 1909 to protest against this injustice meted out by the Government to the "important community of the Punjab." Presiding over the meeting Rai Sahib Ram Saran, "the leading Hindu *reis*", expressed the belief that "the Hindu interests unfettered by the weakening desire for union would grow stronger and progress better."[24] Two resolutions were passed at this meeting. While the first condemned the Government's move to grant seats to the Muslims in excess of

20. Chand, op. cit., p. 12.
21. Ibid., p. 26.
22. Ibid., p. 17.
23. Idem.
24. *The Tribune*, March 21, 1909.

their number, the second demanded that "in case the differential treatment of the communities is finally determined in framing the scheme for reform of Councils, this meeting urges that in consequence of their numbers and influence the Hindus of this province be placed on a footing of equality with the Muhammedans...."[25] Describing the significance of the Lahore meeting, the editor of *The Tribune* wrote: "....One glance would have sufficed to convince the impartial observer that it was the heart of the community that had been stirred to have brought hundreds of matter-of-fact businessmen to the meeting. The presidential platform made an equally remarkable show in this respect where the *reises,* the businessmen, and the aristocracy of intellect, the aristocracy of wealth, rubbed shoulders together and took part in giving expression to the keenly felt and deep-seated feelings of the community to which they have the honour and privilege to belong."[26]

A letter published in the readers' column of *The Tribune* exposed the futility of the agitational methods for securing political rights. In truth, the writer of the letter pointed out: "The agitation for political rights is doing serious harm to the Hindus in all parts of India while the Muhammedans who not only kept themselves aloof from this agitation but always opposed it, enjoy the fruits of our labour.....The Hindus have been carrying on agitation at great sacrifice for the last 25 years for increased political rights being given to the Indians..... *Following the example of the Moslems we must make it a point that whatever we do, we do for the exclusive benefit of the Hindu and need not bother for other communities who can well take care of themselves without our help...By ceasing from agitation we will devote our time and attention to better pursuit and will also win the good-will of the Government which is so necessary for our progress. The Muhammedans have benefitted by this policy, and there is no doubt that the Hindus will benefit likewise."*[27]

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25. Idem.
26. Ibid., March 23, 1909.
27. Ibid., March 19, 1909.

The course suggested in the letter was a safe one. Consequently, on the occasion of Lord Minto's visit to Lahore the prominent Hindus of the Punjab decided to submit their "humble memorandum" to the Viceroy, hoping that the concessions sought therein would receive a favourable consideration at his hands. The Hindu memorandum was submitted on July 6, 1909. It ran as follows :

"...It is scarcely necessary to speak of the tradition of loyalty of the Hindus of the province. But the existence of anarchist designs in some parts of India most certainly demand that we should assure Your Excellency that such designs are viewed with utmost abhorrence by the Hindu community of the Punjab and that they will always be ready to put down anarchism and lawlessness of every description.

We beg respectfully to assure Your Excellency that the changes which, it is now announced, are proposed to be introduced in that Scheme in deference to the wishes of a section of our fellow countrymen of the Mohammedan pursuasion have filled the Hindus with great dismay. And we, therefore, take the liberty of placing before Your Excellency the view of the community to which we have the honour to belong in the fervent hope that due consideration may be vouchsafed to them before any final decision is arrived at as to the shape which the proposed changes should assume.

The Hindu community humbly submits that while every reasonable precaution may be adopted to safeguard the interests of minorities where they are likely to be jeoparadized, no case has been made out for any special concession to any community on the score of its alleged historical importance and that the claim of 'excessive representation' advanced in certain quarters, in connection with Reform Scheme, is opposed to the principle of justice and fair play....It is hardly necessary to state that the Hindus are as loyal as their Mohammedan brethern; that the British acquired the country from the Hindus; that most of the Mohammedans are descendants of converted Hindus, at one with the latter in many of their thoughts, habits and usages; and that the Hindu element in the Indian army.....is predominent and guards the Empire effectively against foreign aggression or internal commotion....It is far from us to clamour

for special privileges, but justice and fair play is all that we demand. . . ."[28]

The Hindu leaders did not receive a favourable response from Lord Minto. They soon realised they could not hope to act as a pressure group in the Punjab politics without widening the area of their activity and mobilising the entire Hindu community of the province. A Hindu Conference, therefore, was called in 1909 to deliberate on the following subjects: "1. Hindus and the Punjab Land Alienation Act and Pre-emption Acts. 2. Hindus and Reform Scheme. 3. Hindus and Government service (with special reference to the Police department). 4. Desirability of strengthening feelings of Hindu Nationality and Hindu unity. 5. Encouragement of the study of Sanskrit, Hindi and Punjabee. 6. Encouragement of Kathas of Hindu Shastras in towns and villages. 7. Celebrations of National (Hindu) festivals. 8. Desirability of writing a true history of the Hindus. 9. Decrease in the numerical strength of the Hindus—its causes and remedies. 10. Physical degeneration of Hindus. 11. Protection of Hindu widows and orphans. 12. Better treatment of low-caste Hindus. 13. Unification of sub-castes. 14. Encouragement of Ayurvedic system of Medicine."[29] We have quoted the agenda of the first Conference of the Punjab Hindu Sabha to show how a conflict of economic interests turned into a political tug-of-war between the privileged sections of the two communities and very soon engulfed other areas of life as well.

The process of communalisation of social and cultural life was initiated deliberately as can be seen in the case of the Punjabi Hindus. A scheme of Hinduising the Punjabi Hindus who in their culture and mode of life were not very different from the Muslims was chalked out. It was openly advocated that "a Hindu should not only believe but make it part and parcel of his organization, his life, and his conduct, that he is a Hindu first and Indian afterwards."[30] To achieve this, Hindus were told not only "to seek and insist" upon their due

28. Ibid., April 6, 1909; also July 9, 1909.
29. *The Punjabee*, October 9, 1909; *The Tribune*, October 26, 1909.
30. Chand, op. cit., p. 72.

share in "the state patronage", but also to take equal precaution "to see that no undue and unjust preference is given to foreign ideas, foreign letters, and foreign language"[31] by the Government. Arabic, Persian and Urdu all being alien languages, they were to be shunned completely. A virulent propaganda was started against the status granted to Urdu language in the province. The Hindus of Punjab were advised to renounce their traditional Urdu learning and learn Hindi and Punjabee instead. It was considered degrading for the Hindus to flock "in thousands to learn Persian, not only in aided and Government institutions but even in their own pet D. A. V. Colleges," while not "a single Mohammedan student in the whole province could be found who had taken up Sanskrit as the second language of examination...."[32] The dictates of self-respect and self-preservation demanded that the Hindus should not abandon in sheer neglect their "sacred lore and heritage and run after Khakonis and Firdousis...."[33] The Government was accused of imposing Persian on the Hindus which had resulted in keeping "thousands and tens of thousands of Hindus" ignorant of the "truths of the Upanishads and the Bhagwat Gita and the equally valuable teachings of Manu" and "irretrievably committed them to a knowledge of foreign dogmas and foreign doctrines."[34] Hindus were asked not to forget ever that next to religion, language "is one of the chief distinguishing features of a community."[35]

Thus the colour of Punjab politics changed dramatically within one year of the introduction of the Reform Act of 1909. Every issue, whether economic or political, became communal and added to the growing tension between the two communities. Each community demanded a fixed share on communal basis—from seats in the Councils and Municipal Boards to the Government services. The attitude of the Punjab Hindus was as aggressive as that of Muslim minority of United Provinces.

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31. Ibid., p. 41.
32. Idem.
33. Ibid., p. 40.
34. Ibid., p. 38.
35. Ibid., p. 41.

Although the Hindus constituted 38 per cent of the total population of the Punjab, they demanded not only parity with Muslims but superiority over them. Municipal Boards became the real battle-field of Punjab politics.[36] The peculiar feature of Punjab politics was that the upper sections of the two communities showed great readiness to cooperate with the authorities for obtaining some paltry concessions here and there on purely local basis. Whatever interest they took in national politics, was primarily aimed at furthering their sectional interests in local politics.

After petitioning and protesting vigorously for two years, the Punjab Hindu leaders set their oars to rest. But the rumour of a possible rapprochement between the League and the Congress put them on the alert again. This time they were determined to see that the Congress would not barter away "the rights and privileges of the majority to placate the recalcitrant minority." However, the Congress's right to negotiate for the Hindus could not be challenged by insignificant political organization of one province. Obviously, the cooperation of the Hindus of other provinces was very necessary. Keeping this in mind the Punjab Provincial Hindu Conference in its Ambala Session of December 1913 passed the following resolution : "It is highly desirable that a general conference of the Hindus of India be held at Hardwar on the occasion of Kumbhamela in 1915."[37]

The line initiated by the Punjab Hindus found enthusiastic support from the Hindu leaders of Bengal, Bihar and United Provinces who had not reconciled themselves to the special rights and privileges granted to the Muslim minority in these provinces at the cost of the "just rights of the majority"., The policy of the Congress of "running around the Muslims had proved futile."[38] The growing demands of the League could not be checked without a strong Hindu organization which would devote itself exclusively to the Hindu cause. After hectic

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36. Ibid., p. 22, 23.

37. Prakash, Inder : *A Review of the History and Work of the Hindu Mahasabha*, New Delhi, 1952, p. 30.

38. *The Tribune*, September 6, 1914.

correspondence between the leaders of different provinces, a committee was formed to make necessary arrangement for the proposed conference at Hardwar.

On 19 December 1915, the Secretaries of the All-India Hindu Conference issued an appeal stating: "Because of division amongst us (Hindus), our rights are hardly recognised and at every turn they are being assailed, while other communities in India have made wonderful progress through mutual cooperation and good organization. If these facts are patent every intelligent Hindu must try to solve the problem of restoring solidarity of Hindu congeries of human beings. The interests of the Hindu society as a whole must be well realised and guarded. Individual sects and castes ought to be led to feel themselves as members of one organised whole, whose duty it is to strengthen in every way the body politic of the whole community."[39]

The first session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held on 9 and 10 April 1915 under the Presidentship of Sit Mahendra Nandi, the Maharaja of Kasim Bazar. But in this two-day session all discussions on the current political question were scrupulously avoided by the participants. Stress was laid on Hindu solidarity and the need for social reform amongst the Hindus. Removal of the caste-system, upliftment of the depressed classes, widow-remarriage etc. were some of the major items discussed at length and various schemes were formulated to eradicate social evils.[40] In his speech the Maharaja defended the Hindu attempt towards social consolidation: "If....we make efforts to set our house in order or hold closer together the scattered units of our faith, it cannot imply a menace to other community or faith."[41] The first session of the Hindu Mahasabha, therefore, achieved nothing more than bringing a few Hindu leaders together at one place. The Hardwar session did not alter the position of the Hindu Mahasabha in any substantial manner. It continued to be a provincial organi-

39. Ibid., December 14, 1915.

40. Ibid., April 12, 1915.

41. Idem.

zation of the Punjab Hindus up to 1923, having no branches in any other part of India.[42]

The elevation of a provincial organization to all-India status imposed certain responsibilities on the Punjab leaders. They had to use a new political terminology to clothe their parochial ambitions. Hindi was deliberately chosen as the means of political propaganda in the hope of forging an immediate link with at least the Hindi speaking Hindus in the country. Addressing a Hindu Sabha meeting at Lahore, Pundit Din Dayal Sharma said: "To form a nation three elements were necessary, viz. a common language, a common dress and common religious beliefs. Leaving the other two aside, a common language was the thing without which no people could either command a religion or a country of their own. The Punjab specially had been guilty in not developing this side of nationality...Hindi was Greek to most of them (the Punjabi Hindus) and they had to depend on English or Urdu translation for the study of their religious works."[43] In another lecture Lala Hansraj quoted figures to show that the number of Hindi speaking people was larger than any other vernacular,[44] while Pundit Har Narayan went to the extent of calling *Hindi* the *lingua franca* of India.[45] But even in the Punjab the tempo of Mahasabha activities could not be kept at a high pitch. Developments like the introduction of Rowlatt Bill and the episode of Jallianwala Bagh activised the nationalistic trend in the Punjab which was further intensified by the Non-Co-operation Movement. The Hindu communal forces suffered a temporary setback as a result of this and receded for a while. However, the introduction of Dyarchy and the communal riots that followed the Non-cooperation Movement instilled a new life in the Hindu communal movement in the later years.

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42. Although in U.P. the Hindu Sabha came into being in 1919, it was not active till 1934. In Bihar, C.P. and Bombay the Hindu Sabhas were established in 1922, 1923 and 1924 respectively. See Prakash, op. cit., pp. 241, 244, 248.

43. *The Leader*, October 23, 1915.

44. Ibid., October 24, 1915.

45 Ibid., January 2, 1916; *The Tribune*, November 3, 1915.

Although the Hindu Mahasabha leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya did not approve of the conditions on which Gandhi had brought about the Hindu-Muslim entente, they showed no hesitation in supporting the Non-cooperation Movement of the Khilafat days. But the subsequent communal riots left them completely disenchanted with the joint-action programme sponsored by the Congress. Their disillusionment turned into bitter anger when Gandhi and the Khilafat leaders deliberately chose to condone the Muslim atrocities in Malabar, Multan and Kohat. However, the course of Hindu politics was not determined by these communal strifes alone. Tension had started in certain areas long before the uprising in Malabar and the "Kohat massacre". The operation of the Act of 1919 at the provincial level had made communal politics a serious affair. Communal issues had become more concrete than they had been at the commencement of the War. The increased share of power which the Muslims received according to the terms of the Lucknow Pact had adversely affected the upper class and educated Hindus of U.P., the Punjab and Bengal without finally satisfying the ambitions of the Muslim League. Political issues got more inextricably mixed up with economic issues since the percentage of seats a community could claim in the legislature had become the criterion for fixing the percentage of jobs for its members in the government. Whereas the Muslims procured a comfortable position in the Hindu majority areas due to weightage given to them, the percentage of jobs the Hindus could claim in the Muslim majority areas of Bengal and Punjab was drastically revised. Sixty per cent of the jobs were reserved for the Muslims in both these provinces.[46] Such an arrangement could never be palatable to the ever-increasing educated middle class of the Hindu community. Discontentment of these Hindus coupled with the exaggerated demands of the League and the large-scale communal riots in the country created a situation which helped the revival of the Hindu Mahasabha which had become an inert body after its famous

46. *The Tribune*, August 11, 1925.

Hardwar session in 1915. An All-India Conference of the Hindus was held at Benares in 1923 under the presidentship of Pandit Malaviya. The whole organization of the Hindu Mahasabha was overhauled to make it politically a more effective body. Its objectives were redefined with a view to giving a new direction to the Hindu communal movement. In formulating the new objectives, care was taken to distinguish the Hindu Mahasabha from the Congress and to make it an organization exclusively devoted to the championing of the political rights of the Hindus. The newly declared aim of the Hindu Mahasabha was: "the maintenance, protection and promotion of Hindu race, Hindu culture and Hindu civilization for the advancement of Hindu Rashtra." To achieve it the Mahasabha was to endeavour, (a) "To organize and consolidate all sections of the Hindu society into the organic whole; (b) To protect and promote Hindu interests whenever and wherever necessary; (c) To remove untouchability and generally to ameliorate and improve the condition of the so-called depressed classes of the Hindu community; (d) To revive and promote the glorious ideals of Hindu womanhood; (e) To promote cow-protection; (f) To promote the physique of the Hindus and promote their martial spirit; (g) To reclaim all those who have left the Hindu fold and welcome others into the Hindu fold; (h) To found orphanages and rescue homes for orphans and helpless women; (i) Generally to take steps for promoting religious, educational, social, economic and political interests and rights of the Hindu community; (j) To promote good feeling among the Hindus, ex-Hindus and other communities in India and to act in a friendly way with them with a view to evolving a united and self-governing Indian Nation."[47] It was also explained that "the Mahasabha would not side or identify itself with or oppose or interfere with any particular sect or sects of the Hindu community in respect of its religious practices."[48]

Lala Hardayal, one of the eminent revolutionaries of the Punjab, came out with another blue-print for the future course of action for the Hindus. It appeared in the form of a statement

47. *Nehru Museum, Savarkar Records, Film No.* 3.
48. Idem.

in one of the leading newspapers of the Punjab in 1925. He said: "I declare that the future of the Hindu race, of Hindustan and of the Punjab rests on these four pillars: (1) Hindu Sangathan,[49] (2) Hindu raj, (3) Shuddhi of the Moslems, and (4) Shuddhi of Afghanistan and the frontiers. So long as the Hindu nation does not accomplish these four things, the safety of our children and grand children will ever be in danger, and the safety of the Hindu race will be impossible.... The Moslems and Christians are far removed from the confines of Hinduism, for their religions are alien and they love Persian, Arabic and European institutions. Thus, just as one removes foreign matter from the eye, Shuddhi must be made of these two religions. Afghanistan and the hilly regions of the frontiers were formerly parts of India, but are present under the domination of Islam....mountain tribes are always warlike and hungry, and if they become our enemies, the age of Nadir Shah and Zaman Shah will begin.... If Hindus want to protect themselves, they must conquer Afghanistan and frontiers and convert the mountain tribes."[49]

After 1923, the Hindu Mahasabha took up the enormous task of organizing the fragmented Hindu society into an organic whole. Addressing the Hindu Conference at Bombay (December 5, 1925) Lala Lajpat Rai told his audience that communal solidarity had become essential for the security of their political future, because the Muslims "insisted on communal representation all along the political line and also on organizing their separate communal entity so completely as to become the dominating communal entity in India. This is bound to come about if other communities refuse to organize themselves. Their refusal or neglect to do so means acquiescence in a condition of things which must sooner or later end in their merging in or subordination to other community. Organization means power, influence and prestige. Those who neglect to organize must give way to the organized. If the Hindu community does not wish to commit political *Hara kiri*, they must move every nerve to be communally efficient and united. To divide itself into

49. Cited in Ambedkar, B.R.: *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Bombay, 1941, p. 123.

religious sections with separate political ambition, is the greatest folly of which a community can be guilty."[50]

To accelarate the process of Hindu Sangathan and to fortify its political position, the Mahasabha conceived an elaborate programme of Shuddhi. The Hindu leaders, in the early stages, had not taken any notice of the utterances of Sir Ameer Ali and others when they said that the Hindus did not constitute a nation, or, that the untouchables were not an integral part of the Hindu community. But the aftermath of the Khilafat movement and the agitation of Mr. Rajah and Dr. Ambedkar shook the confidence of the upper-caste Hindus. One section of the Hindus had toyed with the idea of Shuddhi for quite some time as a measure of social reform. Now they realized that it could also serve as a weapon of political defence and offence. The Malabar and Multan riots in which a large number of Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam opened the eyes of the Hindu leaders to the future threat. They also became conscious of the missionary propaganda of the Ulema and the Christians who exploited, for purposes of conversion, the social inequalities practised by the Hindus. The Hindu leaders, therefore, became vociferous in advocating acceptance of the untouchables within the Hindu fold on an equal footing with the other castes. Describing the cruel treatment of the Depressed Classes, Lala Lajpat Rai said: "...today the question is whether we Hindus are prepared to put aside our pride of caste and embrace in brotherly fold these poor brethern in whose veins courses the same blood as in ours, and build strength for ourselves; or are we going to let others take these into their own fold. Both Mohammedans and Christians are prepared to uplift them by receiving them into their faiths... Those Hindus who believe in Hindusim and whose hearts feel for Hindu race must, therefore, place this problem in the very forefront of any programme of Hindu reform; and spend their power and money in its solution."[51] This solution was purifica-

50. *The Tribune*, December 1, 1925; also Joshi, V.G.: *Lajpat Rai: Writings and Speeches*, Vol. II, p. 253.

51. *The Tribune*, September 27, 1932.

tion (Shuddhi) of the untouchables. On another occasion he asked the Hindus to abandon "the old game of throwing out people on very small pretence." Instead the Hindu should seek occasions "to bring people back into Hindu fold without injuring anybody's scruples."[52] In his presidential speech at the special session of the Hindu Mahasabha held at Belgaum in 1924 Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya pointed out: "For centuries, Muhammedans had been converting Hindus, and the majority of the Muslims of India were converts. Numerous Christian missions were laso carrying on a campaign of proselytisation. Therefore, the question of having a Hindu Mission for proselytisation had become a very pressing necessity in the situation created in this country by the activities of Muslim and Christian Missions."[53] Guru Shankaracharya administered a stern warning to the Hindus. Addressing a Hindu gathering at Prayag he said: "If in these hard times, Hindus do not take seriously in hand the holy work of 'conversion' and prevent their brethern from embracing alien faiths through mistaken views .. (then) within ten decades you shall find no Hindu on the surface of this earth."[54] Hindus were told that "if this process of slicing away of the Hindu community continues, at no distant date the Hindus will be reduced to a minority even where they are in a majority."[55] All these warnings had their due effect on the Hindu mind. The orthodox Hindus who had staged a walk-out at the Benares session of the Hindu Mahasabha on the issue of the Shuddhi of the untouchables gradually veered round, in the thirties, to the idea of Shuddhi.[56] Once the barriers were removed, the area of Shuddhi was expanded to include the non-Hindus as well. Hindu communalists like Bhai Parmananda and Guru Golwalkar found in the Shuddhi of the non-Hindus the ultimate security of their nation.

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52. Cited in Prakash, op. cit., p. 96.
53. *The Tribune*, December 29, 1924.
54. Quoted in Prakash, op. cit., p. 90.
55. Idem.
56. *Annual Register*, Vol. II, 1932, 351.

The grant of separate electorate had started a game of "numbers" in Indian politics, each community vying with the other to increase its numerical strength. Proselytizing programmes of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha were a direct outcome of the communal electorate. The editor of the Pratap had expressed his fears in 1921 when Census Reports were under preparation. He wrote: "In this country the Government is based on numbers....Shuddhi has become a matter of life and death for the Hindus. The Muslims have grown from a negative quantity into seventy million; the Christians number four million. Two hundred and twenty million Hindus are finding it difficult to live because of seventy million Muslims. If their number further increases, only God knows what will happen. It is true that Shuddhi should be for religious purposes alone, but the Hindus have been obliged by other considerations as well to embrace their other brothers. If the Hindus do not wake up now, they will be finished."[57]

From 1923 to 1933 the main pre-occupation of the Hindu Mahasabha was to oppose the demands of the Muslim League and to get the Lucknow Pact revised which had denied the Hindus the advantages of a minority in Bengal and the Punjab. The Mahasabha leaders were also not in favour of the continuation of separate electorates for an indefinite period. They were against the creation of the independent provinces of Sind and the North-West Frontier. The memorandum submitted by the All-Sind Hindu Association to the Simon Commission pointed out: "the demand for separation of Sind from Bombay is frankly communal. Right up to 1920, the Hindus and the Muslims of Sind were generally opposed to the separation of Sind and their united demand was for more integral connection with the Bombay administration by the repeal of that archaic piece of legislation known as the Sind Commissioner's Act."[58] The Association also marshalled statistical data to establish that meagre economic resources of Sind would not be able to sustain the burden of an independent province. The

57. The *Pratap*, January 10, 1921.
58. *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vol. XVI. Part I. London, 1930. p. 232.

real reason, however, was that the separation of Sind from Bombay would have reduced the Hindus to the position of an insignificant minority and rendered them permanently ineffective in that region. The Hindus of the North-West Frontier did not support the proposal for the introduction of constitutional reforms on the pattern of British provinces in that region. But in case a new province was to be created, they argued, "the Hindus of the province pay as much as about 80% of the income tax, and their share of the land revenue is also considerable as they still possess some lands. They, therefore, claim that their representation in the Local and Imperial Councils should be commensurate with their contribution to the Provincial and Indian exchequers."[59]

In his note of dissent to the Majority Report, Rao Sahib D. R. Patil opposed the special privileges claimed by the Muslims in Bombay. He wrote : "forty-three seats out of the total of 140 have been allotted in the Majority Report to the Muslims whose total population, both rural and urban, comes to 3,775,400. Roughly speaking one seat goes to about 87,800 Muslims. For non-Muslim constituencies, the Majority have been allotted 27 seats in urban areas for a population of 1,575, 378."[60] According to him, since Muslims of Bombay Presidency formed only one-fifth of the total population of the Presidency. they were entitled for 28 seats out of a total of 140 seats. The Muslim demand for separate electorate and 31% representation was based on the Lucknow Pact which the Congress leaders had entered into without obtaining the consensus of the Hindu community. Rao Sahib D. R. Patil, therefore, regarded the pact as "unjust, inequitable and unauthorised...."[61]

Criticising the double standard applied by the Muslim leaders in defining the majority and minority status of Hindus and Muslims in the British provinces, Sardar G. N. Majumdar expressed his dissent to the Bombay Majority Report by pointing out "..attempts are being made in certain quarters to

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59. Ibid., p. 257.
60. *Indian Statutory Committee Report* (Report on the Committees), Calcutta, 1930, Vol. III, p. 73.
61. Idem.

depart from the provision of the Pact in certain provinces while requiring their fulfilment in others. The principle of giving to the minorities, representation in the Local Councils in excess of what their proportion to the populaion demands, which is incorporated in the Pact, is invoked only in those provinces in which Muhammedans are in a minority while its application is challenged in those in which the Muhammedans form the majority of the population. Such a selective enforcement of the Pact cannot be allowed. Either it stands as a whole or is abandoned as a whole."[62]

It must be added here that the National Executive of the Hindu Mahasabha had decided to boycott the Simon Commission appointed by the British Government to enquire into the working of the Reform Scheme introduced by the Act of 1919, although this decision was not followed by the provincial wing of the Mahasabha in the Punjab. Nevertheless, in contrast to the numerous individual and official memoranda submitted by the Muslims, the Commission received only three memoranda dealing with the exclusive political rights of the Hindus.[63] Authors of these three memoranda were Hindus of Sind, North-West Frontier Province and Punjab. The other three memoranda submitted by the Hindus of Madras, Orissa and United Provinces were concerned only with social issues like caste or Hindu personal law etc., which the *Sanatanadharmis* had brought forward to resist the change demanded by the progressive Hindu classes and the depressed class leaders like Dr. Ambedkar and Rajah. The Punjab Hindu Sabha leaders had adopted a defiant attitude even in the case of Nehru Report. Except Lala Lajpat Rai no one had come from Punjab to attend the Conference called by Dr. B. S. Munje to discuss the proposals of Nehru Report. Nor did the Punjab leaders endorse the Nehru Report in toto as was done by the Central leadership. Parts of the Report relating to Sind, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Bengal were not acceptable to them.

The stand taken by the Hindu Mahasabha regarding sepa-

62. Idem.

63. See *Indian Statutory Commission Report*, Vols. XV and XVI.

rate electorate was identical with that of the Congress, although its motives were radically divergent. A joint electorate could be a sure passport to majority domination, in other words, of Hindu supremacy. But it is easily understandable why the Hindu minorities in Sind, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province and Bengal made demands similar to those made by the Muslim minorities in U.P., C.P., Bihar, Bombay etc. When administrative changes in the North-West Frontier became certain after the Round Table Conference, the Hindus of North-West Frontier requested the government to grant them separate electorate with weightage on the grounds that (a) "The Frontier Hindus are the real gate-keepers of India." (b) Because the Hindus and Sikhs, though small in number, had "very large investments in the province" and possessed "vast and valuable properties, both in the towns and rural areas." Moreover, they had also "invested very large amounts of money in loans to the agriculturists" who were predominantly Muslims. Government was reminded of the fact that the Hindus and Sikhs paid to the state "more than 80% of the taxes on income," and it was they who mostly contributed "towards the Stamps, Excise and Registration Revenues..."[64] Furthermore, the trade and commerce in those areas was largely dependent on them. The Hindus of North-West Frontier Province wanted a statutory guarantee for inclusion of a Hindu in the provincial cabinet because: (a) "The Imperial interests of the Government require that the Governor in this Province should have for advice and support in the cabinet one non-Muslim minister." (b) "The financial stakes of the Hindus and Sikhs in this province, who own extensive and very valuable properties....require that one Hindu should be in the inner counsels of the Frontier Government, that is, in the Cabinet." (c) "The Hindus are invariably victims of raids.... They are, therefore, more vitally concerned in the

64. From 1 to 5 see: *Summary of the Memoranda submitted by the Hindu Minority of the North-West Frontier Provinces to the Joint Select Committee*, London, 1930; also see *Report of the North-West Frontier Subject Committee*, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 134 to 136; and *Nehru Museum, Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. IB.

maintenance of peace and tranquility and efficient administration of the Police, Jails and Justice departments." (d) "The commercial and trade interests of the Hindus who are still the pioneers and leaders in commerce and trade of the province require that communications in the province are well kept and amplified...."[65]

The Hindus of Sind did not lag behind in demanding similar concessions. They reminded the British Government of the significance of their loyalty "....in conquering Sind and sustaining the British rule thereafter..." Since the Hindus of Sind were culturally superior to the Muslims it was suggested that they be allotted 40 per cent seats instead of 37.7 per cent worked out on their numerical strength. Separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency was opposed on the ground that the Hindus "will not only lose their share in the amenities, the credit, and increased power open to the Hindu majority in Bombay including Sind, but will be relegated as an ineffective minority in a Council with limited powers of control over the greater part of Sind and with little or no capacity for developing Sind."[66]

The Hindu communalists of Bengal opposed the claims of the Muslims for "statutory majority" in Bengal Legislative Council. "We maintain", they said "that the claims of Bengal Mussalmans are anti-national, selfish, and not based on any principle of equity and justice. The claim for a statutory majority in Bengal, if conceded, will really keep the Hindus in a perpetual state of inferiority and impotance and really aims at a form of communal government and tyranny." Yet another argument offered by the Bengal Hindus was that "the achievement of the Hindus of Bengal stand foremost in the whole of India in the fields of art, literature and science, whereas the Muslim community in Bengal has not so far produced a single name of all-India fame in these fields....Political fitness cannot be divorced from larger intellectual life of the Nation and in political fitness the Mussalmans of Bengal are vastly inferior to Hindus...." The Government was requested to

65. Idem.
66. Idem.

disregard the fact of the Muslim majority in Bengal on the ground that the backward communities "grow faster than the communities relatively more advanced, socially, economically and intellectually."[67] "In an "open Letter" to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. N.K. Basu wrote: "I see from the papers that you are promoting still another pact, one between the Hindus and the Mohammedans. No Indian can have anything but admiration for such an attempt. My only excuse for writing this is that I am afraid that like similar other previous settlements, this one may also be arrived at without any consideration of the circumstances in Bengal. Non-Bengalis are apt to forget the contribution, moral and material, that Bengal has been making for the benefit of all India for over a century. They arrive at arrangements without any consultation with Bengal, and play on political hysteria to force them down her throat...."[68]

The Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha held an emergency meeting on 14 July 1932 and passed the following resolutions :

1. "The Sabha emphasises its emphatic disapproval of the solution of the communal problem in the province put forward by irresponsible persons on the basis of an equal division in the legislature and the services and repudiates the claim of such persons to represent the Sabha or any section of the Hindus of the province."[69]

2. "The Sabha emphasises the fact that taking the numerical strength of the adult population of both the communities, the Muslims are not in a majorty and that from the standpoint of education, culture, sacrifice, wealth and the taxes paid, they cannot bear comparison with the Hindus. Hence in any scheme of redistribution of political power, the Hindus may justly claim a superior position in the future Government."[70]

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67. Manifesto issued by the Calcutta Hindu Mahasabha, Calcutta, 1932, p. 2.
68. *Annual Register*, Vol. I, 1932, pp. 287-88.
69. Ibid., p. 319.
70. Idem.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DEVELOPMENT OF HINDU COMMUNAL IDEOLOGY

THE Hindu Mahasabha with its communal propaganda could neither attract a large Hindu following, nor could make any immediate impact on the Indian political scene. The British Government paid scant regard to it as it could secure neither the association nor the blessings of Gandhi who had lent all his weight to the nationalist movement. Even the Muslim League did not acknowledge its separate existence and looked upon it as an appendage to the "Hindu Congress". But this lack of recognition from the Government and the Muslim League did not discourage the Hindu Mahasabha leaders and their determination to uphold the Hindu rights remained unshaken. They were hopeful that in the tense atmosphere created by the rising demands of the Muslim League and the frequent occurrence of communal riots in the country, the popularity of the Hindu Mahasabha would increase; that it would finally emerge as a balancing force in Indian politics, at par with the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress. The crushing defeat which the Hindu Mahasabha suffered in 1937 did not come as a surprise to its members. The party had entered the elections in 1937 under severe limitations. It had no proper organization, no adequate funds nor a mass base. Its prominent leaders were fully aware of these major drawbacks. Behind the public display of their confidence lurked their deep-seated fear that they would lose the battle to the Congress. Ganpat Rai, Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, who could feel the pulse of Delhi and Punjab, went to the extent of suggesting that if possible, the Hindu Mahasabha should avoid contesting elections against the Congress nominees. On 19 May 1934 he wrote to Dr. Munje : "The question before us is—should the Mahasabha throw out a challenge to the Congress : I think it should not; simply because it is not a practicable and possible proposition

to compete with the Congress on terms of equality..."[1] He was specially skeptical about the success of the Hindu Mahasabha in the Hindu majority areas. He requested Dr. Munje, Kelkar, Aney and Pundit Malaviya to concentrate on the Hindus of the majority provinces and guard them against the "virus of divisions of castes, creeds and political parties."[2] This kind of feeling amongst the Hindu Mahasabha workers was quite natural. Except in U.P., Punjab and some parts of C.P. and Bombay Presidency the Mahasabha had no branches in any other province of India. The Hindu Sangathan Movement, though started a decade earlier, had achieved nothing concrete. The dividing lines drawn by caste and region had proved serious obstacles in the consolidation of the Hindu community. There was no justification for the Hindu Mahasabaha to call itself an all-India body. This was very well brought out in a letter written by Padmraj Jain, one of the secretaries of the Mahasabha, to G. D. Savarkar. Referring to the prospects of the Hindu Mahasabha in the elections which were due next, he had analysed the position thus : "the country is getting organized automatically on the lines of the Hindu Mahasabha, but the greatest difficulty in our way is that we have not been able up till now to consolidate the whole work of the Hindu Mahasabha in different provinces and districts."[3] Shuddhi which had caused a scare amongst the Muslims and led to many communal riots had brought little solace to the untouchables. Orthodox leaders were not really prepared to assimilate the untouchables in the main body of the Hindu society. Dr. Ambedkar had shown the way by which a genuine uplift of the untouchables could be effected. But reservation of seats for the untouchables created serious hurdles in the way of Hindu consolidation, so vehemently advocated by the Hindu Mahasabha, and signs of social and political tension between the upper- and lower-caste Hindus became evident in many regions, specially Madras and Maharashtra. This new chasm within the Hindu community could not be spanned by

1. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. 1.
2. *Savarkar Papers*, Film No. 3.
3. Idem.

the Shuddhi formula of the Hindu Mahasabha. Boycott of elections, however, was out of question. Well-equipped or ill-equipped, the Hindu Mahasabha had to confront the Congress at the polls lest it should lose its credentials as the representative body of the Hindus even in those provinces where it wielded some influence. The pressure from the Hindu leaders of Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province was also an important factor. They were not prepared to risk their future either to the Congress or to the Muslim League.

Time had now come for the Hindu Mahasabha to define its ideology in clear terms.[3] Savarkar assumed the leadership of the Hindu Mahasabha during these crucial years. He re-

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[3a] In 1937 the Hindu Mahasabha presented its revised and amended constitution. Its salient fetaures were:

"Aim: The aim of the Hindu Mahasabha is the maintenance, protection and promotion of the Hindu Race, Hindu culture and Hindu civilization, and the advancement and glory of Hindu *Rashtra, and* with a view to secure them to attain *Purna Swarajya,* i.e. absolute political independence for Hindusthan by legitimate means.

Objects: The objects of the Hindu Mahasabha are—

(a) To organize and consolidate all sections of the Hindu society into one organic whole;

(b) To protect and promote Hindu interests whenever and wherever necessary;

(c) To remove untouchability and generally to ameliorate and improve the condition of the so-called depressed classes of the Hindu community;

(d) To revive and promote the glorious ideals of Hindu womanhood;

(e) To promote cow-protection;

(f) To improve the physique of the Hindus and promote martial spirit amongst them by establishing military schools and organizing volunteer corps;

(g) To reclaim all those who have left the Hindu fold and welcome others into the Hindu fold;.....

(h) To promote good feelings between the Hindus and other communities in India and to act in a friendly way with them with a view to evolve a united and self-governing Indian Nation."

Hindu Mahasabha: Constitution, Objects and Rules, New Delhi, 1937, 1,2.

jected the territorial concept of nationhood propagated by the Congress and came out instead with a well-formulated doctrine of Hindu nationalism. According to him India belonged to those who regarded "Bharat Varsha as their 'Fatherland as well as Holy Land'.[4] The Hindus were "more than a religious community; they were a Rashtra."[5] He pointed out that judged from the modern criterion, the Hindus possessed all the necessary ingredients required by a people to become a nation. They share a "common language, Sanskrit, from which all their cultural languages are derived or are nourished and which forms even today the common language of their scripture and literature which is held in high esteem as the sacred reservoir of ancient scripture and the tongue of their forefathers....They have friends and enemies in common...Above all, the Hindus are bound together by the dearest, most sacred and most enduring bonds of a common Fatherland and a common Holy Land, and these two being identified with one and the same country our Bharatbhumi, our India, the National Oneness and the homogeneity of the Hindus have been doubly sure....Verily the Hindus as people differ most markedly from any other people in the world than they differ amongst themselves....'"[6]

A few years later the same theme was put in different words. Addressing a students' gathering at Kanpur, Savarkar said : "What is called Nationalism can be defined as in fact the National communalism of the majority community which has been ruling and still aspires to rule this country. Thus, in Hindustan it is the Hindus, professing Hindu religion and being in overwhelming majority, that constitute the National community and create and formulate the Nationalism of the Nation. It is so in every country of the world....The minorities, while maintaining their separate religions and civilizations cooperate with the majority communities and merge themselves in the common life and administration of these count-

4. *Samgra Savarkar Vangmay*, Vol. IV, Bombay, 1964, pp. 253, 254.
5. Idem.
6. Idem.

ries."[7] He maintained that "in the formation of nations, religious, racial, cultural and historical affinities count immensely more than their territorial unity."[8] Savarkar declared: "We Hindus, in spite of a thousand and one differences within our fold are bound by such religious, cultural, historical, racial, linguistic and other affinities in common as to stand out as a definitely homogeneous people as soon as we are placed in contrast with any other non-Hindu people—say the English or Japanese or even Indian Muslims."[9] He saw no distinction or conflict between the national and communal aspirations of the Hindus. In his view, "A Hindu patriot worth the name can't but be an Indian patriot as well." He, therefore, proudly asserted "to the Hindus, Hindusthan being the Fatherland and Holy land, the love they bear to Hindusthan is boundless. That is why they predominate in the national struggle that is going on for the overthrow of the British yoke. Even the buried bones in the Andamans would assert this fact."[10] Criticising the Congress brand of nationalism, Dr. Kurtakoty Shankaracharya asserted "Hindusthan is primarily for the Hindus and that the Hindus live for the preservation and development of the Aryan culture and the Hindu Dharma which are bound to prove beneficial to humanity."[11]

The Hindu Mahasabha rejected the argument advanced by the nationalist leaders that all those who inhabit this country, irrespective of their cultural and racial differences were integral part of the Indian nation and could legitimately claim a share in the government of the country. At the Madura Session of the Hindu Mahasabha, K. S. Ramaswamy, the Chairman of the Reception Commitee, stressed the fact that "the Hindus form a large majority of the Indian population and that the Indian Swaraj must necessarily mean the Hindu Swaraj. The Congress stands for democracy and it wants a Democratic Raj in India.....Surely according to the

7. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. 13.
8. Keer, D., *Savarkar and His Times*, Bombay, 1967, p. 229.
9. Keer, op. cit., p. 231.
10. Idem.
11. *Hindu Herald*, Bombay, October 22, 1986.

elementary principles of democracy, Hindus will rule. Then why shun the Hindu Raj?"[12] Savarkar advised the Hindus to learn to view things according to Hindu interests. He described the policy of the Congress as injurious to the well-being of the Hindu community and termed it as "un-national". The Hindus were requested to review "every action and every event in public life from the stand point of only the Hindu interests without mincing matters at all. From the local details of music and the mosque questions right up to the question of Indian Federation and from the internal Indian policy to.....foreign international policy."[13] The Hindus should act openly as Hindus and support, oppose or take every step in the interests of "Hindudom alone." Savarkar made it quite explicit that the politics of the Hindu Mahasabha was "....purely Hindu politics fashioned and tested in Hindu terms only, in such wise as will help the consolidation, freedom and life growth"[14] of the Hindu nation. He warned the Hindu not to be misled by the Congress concept of freedom. "Mere geographical independence of the bit of earth called India should not be confused with real 'Swarajya'. To the Hindus, the independence of Hindusthan could only be worth having if it ensured 'their Hindutva—their religious, racial and cultural identity."[15] "Swarajya to the Hindus must mean only that 'Rajya' in which their 'Swatva', their 'Hindutva' could assert itself without being overloaded by non-Hindu people, whether they be Indian territorials or extra-territorials."[16]

The stand of the Hindu Mahasabha on the question of minorities was explained by Savarkar in the following words: "The Hindus will ever be ready to grant equal rights and representation to all minority communities in India in legislatures and services, civil and political life in proportion to population and merit. The Hindus, although they are an overwhelming majority, will still waive their right of claiming

12. Prakash, op. cit., p. 97.
13. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 367.
14. Ibid., p. 226.
15. Ibid., p. 289.
16. Ibid., p. 353.

preferential treatment and special prerogatives which in fact in every other nation are due to the major community. But the Hindus will never tolerate the absurd and unheard of claim of the minorities to have preferential treatment, weightage or special favours over and above what the majority community obtains. The Hindu nation will go so far as to accept the equitable national principle of 'one man one vote' irrespective of religion or race or culture in the formation of a common Indian State; but it shall knock on the head of any political demand that claims, 'One Moslem three votes' and 'three Hindus one vote' or any cultural demand that antagonises or insults or suppressess the Hindu culture in its historical, linguistic, religious or racial aspect..."[17] "We are prepared to emphasize that the legitimate rights of minorities with regard to religion, culture and language will be expressly guaranteed—on one condition only that the equal rights of the majority also must not in any case be encroached upon or abrogated. Every minority may have separate schools to train up their children in their own tongue, their religious or cultural institutions and can receive Government help also for these—but always in proportion to the taxes they pay into the common exchequer. The same principle must of course hold good in the case of the majority too."[18]

The Hindu leaders made it quite clear that they "cannot take this country as jointly owned by those who either came running away from their countries and sought protection here or those descendants of ex-Hindus, who for the greed of power and money or out of fear renounced their glorious faith and became converts, or those who are the descendants of those barbarous invaders who spoiled our very sacred land, demolished our sacred temples...the country cannot belong to them; if they are to live here, they must live here taking it for granted that Hindusthan is the land of the Hindus, of no one else."[19] Guru Golwalkar, the R. S. S. Chief, was not even

17. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 227.
18. Ibid., p. 367.
19. Prakash, *Where we Differ: The Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha,* New Delhi, 1942, op. cit., p. 66.

willing to concede that the minorities had any right to maintain their separate cultural existence. If minorities wished to stay on the Hindu soil then they "must either adopt Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture, i.e. they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ungratefulness towards their land and its age-old traditions but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead. In a word, they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in this country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights."[20] In short, if the non-Muslims accepted the conditions laid down by the R. S. S. Chief, namely, abandonment of their cultural nationality, they could be admitted to the citizenship of the Hindu nation, otherwise these "foreign elements" were "to live at the sweet will of the national race."[21]

The Hindu Mahasabha came out with an economic programme in 1937 to draw the Hindu intelligentia to its fold and create a mass base for its ideolgy. Although the avowed aims of this programme were to bring economic prosperity to the down-trodden Hindu masses, in reality it was meant to serve the interests of the upper class Hindus only. After acknowledging that the "peasantry and the working class form literally the chief source of national wealth, health and strength", it stated "peasants and labourers must be enabled to have a share in the distribution of wealth of such an extent as to enable them to have not only a bare margin of existence.... Nevertheless it must be remembered that they too being a part and parcel of the Nation as a whole must share obligations and responsibilities and, therefore, can only receive their share in such a way as is consistent with the general development...."[22] If an "industry is flourishing, the profits will be shared in large

20. Baxter Craig: *The Jan Sangh*: The *Biography of an Indian Political Party, Philadelphia*, 1969, p. 30.

21. Idem.

22. Philips, op. cit., p. 263.

portion by the labour. But on the contrary, if it is a losing concern, not only the Capitalist but to a certain extent even the Labour will have to be satisfied with diminishing returns so that the National Industry as such may not altogether be undermined by the over-bearing attitude of the selfish class interests of either the capitalists or the labourerites.... The same principle applies to the cultivation of land. We should co-ordinate the interests of the landlord and the peasant that the national agricultural production may on the whole be developed and does not suffer owing to any selfish tussle between the class interests of the landowner or the tenants or the tiller."[23] "All strikes or lock-outs which are obviously meant or inevitably tend to undermine and cripple National industry or production in general or are calculated to weaken the economic strength of the nation as a whole must be referred to State arbitration and get settled or in serious cases quelled."[24] It also declared that "private property must in general be held inviolate. And in no case should there be on the part of the State any expropriation of such property without reasonable recompense."[25]

The declared objective of the Hindu Sangathanist economics was to protect the economic rights of the Hindus "whenever they may be threatened by the economic interests of the non-Hindus...."[26] But Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders who collected evidence of the oppression of the Hindu peasants and workers at the hands of Muslim landlords and industrialists conveniently ignored situations where Hindu landlords were exploiting their own co-religionists. The Hindu Mahasabha, in fact, was not in a position to take a stand against the Hindu zamindars and industrialists because it received its main support from these very classes. Neither Lala Harkishen, Raja Narendra Nath, Raja Rampal Singh nor Savarkar who received three thousand rupees per month from Seth G. D. Birla[27] could ever advocate measures detrimental to the pro-

23. Idem.
24. Ibid., 264.
25. Idem.
26. Ibid., 264.
27. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. 5, 1938.

pertied class. Expressing his views on the socialistic programme of the Congress, Ganpat Rai sarcastically wrote to Savarkar "the Congress has to its credit this latest achievement that it has alarmed the propertied classes about their future...."[28] It is not surprising to find this "alarmed" class of the *zamindars* and *taluqdars* in U.P. and Bihar, who had for decades remained immune to political developments in the nation, suddenly discovered the significance of the Hindu Mahasabha and came forward to get themselves enrolled as the champions of Hindu nationalism. Raja of Tiloi, Gonda etc. found the "economic dispensation" of the Congress harmful for the prosperity of their "rayats" who were living a contended life under their paternal care."[29] Addressing the 9th Bihar Hindu Conference in 1940 Shyama Prasad Mukherjee said: "It is a matter of congratulation that many persons of wealth and influence have joined the Hindu Mahasabha in your province along with less fortunate in life."[30] The attitude of the Hindu Mahasabha towards the upper classes was made clear in a special resolution passed as early as 1933. In this resolution, the leaders of the Mahasabha condemned all movements advocating extinction of capitalists and landlords as a class on the ground that such movements "will ultimately retard all progress and make the redemption of Hindusthan impossible."[31]

Besides making the special gesture towards the *zamindars* and capitalists the Hindu Mahasabha for the first time endeavoured to influence the mind of Hindu youths. Savarkar and Dr. Munje were unhappy at the careless attitude and the lack of communal consciousness amongst the Hindu students. They were very conscious of the absence of Hindu young men in their movement. They put the entire blame on the western system of education for this since it did not allow Indian youth to develop a love for their cultural heritage. A hand-bill issued on the occasion of the Second All-India Hindu Youth Conference in 1937 stated: "The current system of education in India is

28. *Savarkar Papers*, Film No. 3.
29. Idem.
30. Mukherjee, op. cit., pp. 28-29.
31. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 404.

eating into the vitals of the Hindu nation...It breeds contempt for Hindu culture.... The most alarming outcome of this education is the steadily dying Hindu consciousness among the Hindu young men. Our young men fail to realize the worth of Hindu culture and *Dharma*—the noble heritage of our forefathers waiting to be claimed by us. They forget that our grand culture is the perennial supply of lifeblood and that if we shut ourselves from its vitalising and purifying touch, we are mere sham nationalists and sham patriots."[32] Schools and colleges became the centres of the Hindu Mahasabha propaganda at least in the Punjab. Lectures on religion and ancient history and culture were frequently organized in the major cities of the Punjab with the purpose of making the Hindu youth aware of his communal responsibility.

The leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha knew that their success was dependent mainly on two things: (a) to prove conclusively that the Congress was deliberately sacrificing the interests of the Hindu community to appease the Muslims; and (b) to establish that the Muslims constituted a foreign element in the Indian population and had persecuted and exploited the Hindus in the past. The propaganda machinery of the Hindu Mahasabha was geared to achieve these two objectives, i.e. to discredit the Congress and to create a feeling of fear amongst the Hindu masses. Savarkar decried the Congress for not only being "un-national", but also condemned it for being communal. According to him, seen in the wider context of humanity, Indian nationalism as propounded by Congress was truly communal. If race and religion did not count in human affairs then instead of talking about Hindu-Muslim brotherhood the Congress should talk of universal brotherhood. The Indian patriots then should not limit their struggle to Indian cause but should fight for the freedom of Africa and all similar subject countries. If territorial division of humanity is harmless and even praiseworthy, the division on the basis of religion and culture cannot prove destructive for human existence. In short, "Indian or any patriotism cannot but be communal in relation to humanity; for nationality is as strong a principle

32. *Savarkar Papers*, Film No. 3.

of human division as is a radical or religious or cultural community."[33] What made the Congress intolerable to Savarkar was its consistent policy of appeasement towards the Muslims. He was critical of those Congressmen who openly declared to be neither Hindu nor Muslim and yet were never tired of "recognising Muslim organizations and dealing with them and adjusting compromises in the name of the Hindus, even against Hindu interests and to the unbearable humiliation of the Hindus."[34] If the Hindus protested against the Muslim atrocities they were dubbed as communalists. Nationalism of the Congress was of strange character. "Offering blank cheque to the Moslems by one hand" they delivered "ultimatum to the Hindus by the other."[35] In order to avoid being called traitors, the Congress commanded the Hindus: "Get looted but don't report, get stabbed but don't shriek, get repressed but don't organize to resist it as Hindus...."[36] "The working Commitee of the Congress", Savarkar pointed out, "while every day brought harrowing news of anti-Hindu outrages in Sindh, the Congress did not utter a single word of condemnation of it. Nor was a single meeting held throughout India by the Congress to protest against it."[37] In his presidential speech at the Bhagalpur session of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar summarised the wrongs committed by the Congress as follows: All pseudo-nationalists "who get elected on behalf of the Hindu electorate as its representatives" never stand up for their interests "in the Legislature, at the Round Table Conferences or even in the day to day politics etc."[38] "Whenever the question of Hindu interests arises, they refuse to advocate the Hindu cause and even feel themselves insulted if the Government takes them as representatives of the Hindu electorate."[39] "The Hindu interests were actually betrayed in hundreds of

33. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 325.
34. Ibid., p. 297.
35. Ibid., p. 303.
36. Ibid., p. 303-4.
37. Ibid., p. 303.
38. Ibid., p. 457.
39. Idem.

cases by these psuedonationalistic organizations in spite of the fact that they get themselves elected on behalf of the Hindu electorate."[40]

The Hindu communalists completely agreed with the contention of the Muslim League that the Hindus and Muslims were two distinct antagonistic communities which could never be welded into a nation. "Hankering after the will-o-the wisp of a Hindu-Moslem unity", according to them, was bound to prove disastrous. The Hindu Mahasabha firmly believed that such unity was beyond the realm of possiblity since the communal question was "a legacy handed down to us by centuries of a cultural, religious and national antagonism between Hindus and Muslims." Attempts of Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose to reach some kind of settlement with Jinnah were not appreciated by the Hindu Mahasabha. The leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha were not interested in seeing the Muslims politically integrated with the rest of the Indians. The prospect of Muslims joining the Congress in large numbers in 1937 made them very unhappy. Seeking the advice of Raja Narendra Nath, the prominent Hindu Sabha leader of the Punjab, Munje wrote :[40a] "There is one more emergency which is looming large in the very near future. We must also take it into serious consideration immediately. It is the contingency of the defeat by a very large majority of the Muslim League in Bijnor in its bold challenge by the Congress. If the League really suffers a severe defeat, it is sure to demoralise it, as our defeat has demoralised the Hindus in the Hindu Mahasabha. It is then likely that large numbers of Moslems may join the Congress and mass contact movement of the Congress will succeed immensely. This in fact will mean the absorption of the Congress itself by the Moslems. The Congress will then itself be metamorphosed into a Moslem League and the Hindus will then be still greater sufferers than they are now. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will consider it a great personal triumph and his head, if he has any, will be greatly swelled and there is no

40. Idem.

40a. *Nehru Museum, Munje Papers,* File No. 21/1936–38.

knowing what he will do in his swelled-headedness. Besides, the Congress will feel itself to be under great obligation of the Moslems and the Moslems will then be in a realy strong position to dictate the Congress to do meekly anything they will order it to do.....Such is the danger staring us in the face.....[40b]. If unity of India could be preserved only by conceding parity to the minority community, the Hindu Mahasabha was not willing to accept it. In the view of Lala Hardayal, Savarkar etc. liberation of India could be achieved by the collective action of the Hindu community itself without the support of the Muslims. Reprimanding the nationalists, Lala Hardyal posed the question: "Why is Muslim help needed for Swaraj? To those who say that Swaraj can be obtained only through Hindu-Muslim unity I ask, 'If crores of Hindus cannot obtain Swaraj, what guarantee is there that the joint efforts of the Hindus and Muslims to attain Swaraj will be successful? This talk of Swaraj through Hindu-Muslim unity is born of self-deception of some Congressmen. Hindus and Muslims combined in 1857. Were they successful?.... During the Khilafat movement the Hindus and Muslims combined. Did they attain Swaraj? I say that if the Hindus cannot attain Swaraj by their own efforts, they can never attain it with the help of others...."[41] The same views were expressed by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. Addressing the Mahakosala Provincial Hindu Sabha Conference in December 1940 he said: "The time has now come when we should not only feel but declare unhesitatingly that the liberation of our motherland is capable of being accomplished with the united efforts of twenty-eight crores of Hindus who regard this country as the holiest of holy lands on this earth. If other communities join us on the basis of a clear-cut national programme, safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of all, we shall welcome such cooperation. But if they refuse to join us, we shall regard them as a definite obstacle in the path of the achievement of our goal and must strenuously prepare ourselves to win back our freedom by our own efforts. Our outlook in brief

40b. *Nehru Museum: Munje Papers*, File No. 21/1936–38.

41. Hardyal, Lala: *Divine Madness, The Maratha*, May 5, 1938.

should be the attainment of Indian liberty with the support of others, if available, on honourable terms, or without it, if the situation so demands."[42] Shyama Prasad Mukherjee did not believe in compromise as a way of achieving communal unity. According to him, "a strong and virile Hindu movement" was its only answer. Because "only this will make," he said, "the saner elements among the Moslems to realise that a harmonious communal relationship is essential for the safety and welfare of Moslems themselves and it is not a matter which is the primary concern of the Hindus."[43]

While the Congress leaders were desperately trying to conciliate the Muslims, the Hindu Mahasabha went on opposing them whenever it saw a danger to the prestige and power of the Hindus. When in the Lucknow Session of the Muslim League, the Chief Minister of Bengal, Mr. Fazlul Haq, threatened the Hindus that if they persecuted the Muslim minorities in the Hindu majority areas then he would persecute the Hindus of Bengal (Main Hinduon ko Sataunga), Savarkar answered this threat by saying: "The Bengal Hindus are a hard nut to crack. They have at times forced some of the practicing Proconsuls of even powerful British Empire like Lord Curzon to climb down. But if he (Fazlul Haq) ever does persecute the Bengal Hindus then let him not forget that we Hindus also can in Maharashtra and elsewhere deal out to his comrades the same treatment, measure by measure, full to the brim and well shaken."[44] He also added the warning "If you aim....to reduce the Hindus to the position of helots in their own land, you would do well to remember that a succession of Aurangzebs when they wielded an imperial power here had failed to perform that feat and in their attempt to carry out that design only succeeded in digging their own grave. Surely, Jinnhas and Haqs cannot accomplish what Aurangzeb failed to achieve."[45]

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42. Mukherjee, S.P.: *Awake Hindustan,* Calcutta. 1944, p. 37.
43. Ibid., p. 83.
44. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 293.
45. Idem.

In reaction to the "Direct Action" call of the Muslim League in 1940, the Hindu Mahasabha also came out with its programme of militarisation of the Hindu nation. The programme was outlined as follows: "(a) To secure entry for as many Hindu recruits as possible into the army, navy and air-forces. (b) To utilise all facilities that are being thrown open to get our people trained in military and mechanical manufacture of up-to-date war materials. (c) To try and make military training compulsory in colleges and high schools. (d) To intensify the organization of the Ram Sena. (e) To join the civic guard movement with a view to enabling the Hindus to defend their own people against invasion or internal anarchy."[46] As part of the Hindu Sangathan movement the Hindu Mahasabha resolved: (a) "To mitigate the rigour of caste as far as possible and to make determined efforts to abolish subcastes among the various main castes."[47] (b) "To popularise the Hindi language and the Devnagari script by making it compulsory in all Hindu educational institutions and by all other available means."[48] (c) "To make arrangements for congregational prayers in all places of worship at fixed hours, particularly at Hindu festivals and at places of pilgrimage for congregational prayers on occasions like Kumbha etc. in which all pilgrims should be invited to join."[49] (d) "To promote physical fitness amongst the Hindus by providing *akharas,* gymnasiums, playgrounds and necessary equipment for physical culture in all educational institutions, Hindu Sabhas and other organizations."[50] (e) In order to consolidate and maintain the integrity of the Hindu community and in order to add to its strength, this Conference calls upon the Hindus to be on their guard and to take necessary steps to prevent any apostasy among them, to reclaim the apostates and provide facilities for the acquisition of fresh adherents to their

46. Savarkar, op. cit., pp. 439-40.
47. *Resolutions Passed in the 25th Session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha,* 1944, New Delhi, pp. 2 to 6.
48. Ibid., p. 2.
49. Idem.
50. Ibid., p. 4.

ranks."[51] (f) The Sabha urges upon all Hnidu poets and bards to compose such poems and songs as may be calculated to inspire the Hindu youth with love and affection for their community, reverence for their religion and culture and admiration for their heroes and infuse in their minds a martial spirit, courage and determination to sacrifice and suffer in the service of their community and their country..."[52]

Shiv Kumar Pandit, the President of Bulsar Hindu Sabha suggested a redistribution of Hindu population to checkmate the partition scheme of the Muslim League. According to him if out of 27 crores of Hindus 60 lakhs could go from Bihar to Bengal and 71 lakhs of Hindus from U.P. to Punjab and 22 lakhs of Hindus again from U.P. to North-West Frontier Province, then nowhere would the Hindus stand as a minority while their majority would "prevail everywhere."[53] Territorial reorganization was another method suggested by Shiv Kumar Pandit which could help in creating Hindu majority in every region. He said that if Sind and Baluchistan were amalgamated with Bombay Presidency, Punjab and North-West Frontier Province with U.P., and Bengal and Assam with Bihar, then no part of India would be left with a Muslim majority which would justify the demand for partition of the country into two halves.[54]

Since Hindu Mahasabha failed in creating a solid mass base for itself, it turned to the Hindu princes and sought their cooperation to achieve its political objectives. In doing this, they were following the same policy adopted by the Muslim League at the time of its inception. Savarkar was convinced that the Congress stand with regard to the Hindu princes was unwise. He felt extremely unhappy that while the Muslims of India identified themselves completely with the Muslim princes and considered them the "back-bone of Islam", the Nationalist Hindus, carried away by their "democratic" fer-

51. Ibid., p. 5.
52. Ibid., p. 6.
53. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. IV. 19/4/1940.
54. Idem.

vour, treated the Hindu princes with utter contempt. The Congress was wrong in depicting these princes as "an unnecessary burden and as creatures of British imperialism."[55] The result of this attitude had been that while the Muslim princes encouraged the Muslim movements in British India, no Hindu prince had dared to do so. To remedy this situation, Savarkar called upon the Hindus to ignore the Congress propaganda and emulate the Muslim example by treating the Hindu princes as their "natural leaders."[56] He advocated that the practical wisdom lay in realising in time that "the Hindu states are (the) ...only centres of the organized military, administrative and political Hindu strength and are bound to play a more active and more decisive part in the near future in moulding the destiny of Hindu Nation than any other section...."[57] Moreover, he said, "as the defenders of Hindu faith and Hindu honour, they (Hindu states) form the reserve forces of Hindudom....which even today will outweigh by far the utmost which a Hyderabad here or a Bhopal there can do to spite the Hindu cause."[58] The Hindu Mahasabha leaders justified their support to the Hindu states on the ground that at least some of them were "religiously and nationalistically dear to the Hindu."[59] The existence of such states reminded him of his Hindu past. "To abolish these states," it was emphasized, was "to break with the very past of a great nation. If all the states are rubbed off from the map of India, whatever little yellow is left is made red, the Hindus of those states are only to become slaves of the British imperialism as we in British India are ...."[60] *"It is the princes who will be among the saviours of Hindudom and Hindustan...They are the born natural leaders; we (Hindus) must bow before* them..."[61]

55. Prakash, I: *Where We Differ: The Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha*, 1942, p. 288.
56. Ibid., p. 289.
57. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 404.
58. Prakash, op. cit., p. 293.
59. Ibid., p. 282.
60. Idem.
61. Ibid. p. 89.

The hostile attitude of the Congress towards the Hindu princes was an added reason for the Hindu Mahasabha to adopt a protective policy towards them. The Congress agitation for reforms and democratization was strictly confined to the Hindu states. To keep the Muslims in good humour, the Congress did not dare to launch similar agitation in the Muslim states. This provided the Hindu Mahasabha an opportunity to identify the cause of the Hindu Nation with that of the Hindu princes. The Hindu Mahasabha passed a special resolution at its Nagpur Session which stated: "The Mahasabha declares that the Congress policy of coercion and interference in the internal administration of the Indian states under the plausible slogans of responsible Government, is not genuine, inasmuch as the Congress activities in the matter are restricted to and concentrated only in the Hindu states, to the practical exclusion of the Muslim states like Hyderabad, Bhopal, Bhawalpur, Rampur, Malerkotla etc. and, therefore, it beclares that such activities of the Congress are of the nature of harassment and nothing short of abuse of its power to instigate trouble, particularly in the case of such advanced and well governed Hindu states as Travancore, Mysore, Baroda etc...."[62]

The Hindu Mahasabha paid special attention to Nepal because it nurtured the hope that this little mountain state could be turned into a Hindu counterpart of Muslim Afghanistan. Reminding the Hindus that "there still stands Nepal, unassailed and unconquered, as the pride of Hindusthan", Inder Prakash said, "If the Muslims of India can make the Nizam so powerful as to suggest him to be the Emperor of India, there can be a ruler among the Hindu princes as well who can become powerful if backed by the Hindus of the British India and the states to lead India to unity and independence."[63] This appropriate lead could be taken only by Nepal because it was a powerful independent Hindu State. Savarkar's admiration for Nepal knew no bounds. Addressing Nepal, he wrote: "Amidst.... general wreck of Hindu crowns and cornets of Hindu aspira-

62. Ibid., p. 275.
63. Ibid., p. 286.

tion and ambitions I still discern enthroned and living in thee oh Nepal, the seed of Hindu hope. God has not spared thee in vain. Through thee the Hindu race and the Hindu Nation may yet scale the Himalayan height of its ancient glory."[64]

But no amount of praise was sufficient to induce the ruler of Nepal to champion the cause of Hinduism and the Hindu Nation. Repeated invitation of the Hindu Mahasabha asking the King to grace its session were politely turned down. Nor were the Hindu princes of India so impractical as to align their fate with an organization which carried no weight in contemporary politics. Furthermore they had their own organization, the Chamber of Princes, to defend their rights. They were confident that the British rulers whom they had served with utmost loyalty would not abandon them to the nationalists without making adequate provision for their future. They did not mind, however, using the Hindu Mahasabha indirectly at local levels to quieten down the voice of the Congress agitators.

If for its emotional appeal the Hindu Mahasabha chose an anti-Islamic stance, for its respectability it chose to cooperate with the British Government. There was great wisdom in cooperating with the Government. By this method the upper-class Hindus who had organized themselves under the banner of the Hindu Mahasabha, like the members of Muslim League, could further their interests without risking a jail sentence or dismissal from jobs which their involvement in the agitational politics of the Congress was bound to bring. Opposing the Non-cooperation Movement of the Congress, Dr. Munje came out with his philosophy of "responsive cooperation". Addressing the Hindu Conference on May 17, 1933, he made it clear to his audience that the Hindu Mahasabha did not believe in Gandhian non-cooperation, for it believed in the "eternal Sanatan Law of stimulus and response, namely, responsive cooperation..."[65] This philosophy of responsive cooperation was further elaborated and justified by Savarkar at the time of Britain's entry into the Second World

64. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 509.
65. Prakash, Review etc., op. cit., p. 65.

War. "The Hindu Mahasabha holds that the leading principle of all practical politics is the policy of responsive cooperation. And in virtue of it, it believes that all those Hindu Sangathanists who are working as Councillors, Ministers, Legislators and conducting Municipal or any public bodies with a view to utilise those centres of Government power to safeguard and even promote the legitimate interests of the others, are rendering highly patriotic service to our Nation....The policy of responsive cooperation which covers the whole gamut of patriotic activities from unconditional cooperation right up to active and even armed resistance, will keep adapting itself to the exigencies of time, the resources at our disposal and the dictates of our national interests."[66]

Savarkar urged the Viceroy to guard India's Western Frontiers by Hindu forces, to introduce compulsory military training in High Schools and Colleges throughout India, to start and encourage Rifle Classes, to expand the Indian Territorial Force, make the people of India feel that they were fighting for the defence of their country.[67] For him, cooperation with the British Government in its war efforts was in the interest of the Hindus for it could provide them with an opportunity to militarise and industrialise themselves. Savarkar rationalized this policy of cooperation by saying: "Today it may well appear that these men in the armed forces are mere slaves in the pay of a foreign Government; but there can be no doubt that when the crucial moment comes, they will prove themselves real patriots and staunch Hindus."[68] To the students of Scottish Church College, Calcutta, Savarkar told: "Since the days of our first War of Independence in 1857, it had been the policy of the British Government to keep the army out of politics. Our policy against this should be to carry politics into the army by all possible means and once we succeed in this, the battle of freedom will be won."[69] Savarkar toured various places in the country and addressed public

66. Keer, op. cit., p. 255.
67. Ibid., p. 256.
68. Ibid., p. 256.
69. Ibid., p. 258.

meetings to inspire the young Indians to enroll themselves in the British army. In one such meeting he said: "Forces beyond their control have compelled the British Government to trust you with arms and ammunition. Formerly, youths had to rot in cells for being in possession of pistols, but today the Britishers are placing rifles, guns, canons, and machine-guns in your hands. Get fully trained as soldiers and commanders.."[70] Savarkar showed such great enthusiasm in recruiting soldiers for the British army that the nationalists nicknamed him as a "recruit-hero."[71] Even during the Quit India Movement of 1942 the Hindu Mahasabha did not abandon its policy of "responsive cooperation." Explaining the Mahasabha stand in this regard, N. C. Chatterjee said: "Our policy is....Diplomatic Responsive Cooperation. We realise that the whole world was organized on the basis of disciplined violence. Therefore, in order to make India's freedom a reality, we must have a national army and a properly equipped Defence Force able to keep India inviolate..."[72] This of course, could not be done without joining the Indian army or assisting the British Government in whatever capacity possible.

While the Hindu Mahasabha was assuming this militant posture to mobilise Hindu opinion for a "Hindu Rashtra", the Congress decided to negotiate with the Muslim League to resolve the question of the League's demand for Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha took a very dismal view of this and passed a resolution at an emergency meeting of its Working Committee (29 August 1942) which termed all negotiations between the League and the Congress unauthorized. It stated "Inasmuch as attempts are being made by the Muslims to open negotiations with the Congress alone through Gandhiji mainly on the basis of Pakistan, inasmuch as Gandhiji has never disowned Pakistan in unequivocal terms...., inasmuch as Gandhiji has declared more than once that neither he nor

70. Ibid., p. 259.

71. Idem.

72. Chatterjee, N.C.: *Hindu Politics* (Speeches and Addresses), Calcutta, 1944. p. 7.

the Congress represent the Hindu interest...., taking into consideration the pro-Muslim tendencies exhibited by the Congress and Gandhiji for the last 22 years, and taking further into consideration the thick rumour that he was going to give a letter to the Muslim League offering them the formation of the Government of India, the Hindu Mahasabha views with great concern and alarm the proposed negotiations between the League and the Congress and emphatically declares that no settlement of the problem of the future constitution of India or the formation of a national Government before the war ends, would be acceptable to the Mahasabha as representative of the vast majority of the Hindus, unless the Mahasabha is consulted in the matter and are a party to the settlement. The Hindu Mahasabha considers no sacrifice too great in resisting the demand for Pakistan and keeping up the integrity of Hindusthan as one geographical national unit."[73]

Reacting to Rajaji's acceptance of the idea of Pakistan, Savarkar said, "the Indian provinces were not the private properties of Gandhiji and Rajaji so that they could make a free gift of them to any one they liked."[74] As a counter-move to the Gandhi–Rajaji formula, Savarkar organized an Akhand Hindusthan Leaders' Conference on the 7th and 8th of October 1944.[75] He invited all those leaders who had taken a definite stand to oppose the partition of the country. The Akhand Hindusthan Leaders' Conference was held as scheduled. In his inaugural address Jamna Das Mehta denounced the two-nation theory and said: "As a Hindu I reject it; as an Indian I repudiate it, and as an internationalist I repel it."[76] The main resolution passed at the Conference emphasized the oneness and integrity of the country and declared the idea of partition as fatal for all parties concerned.[77] To chastise the Congress for its betrayal of Hindu interests and to raise "Hindudom to incalculable powerful position in the land"

73. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. 31, 1940-42.
74. *The Statesman*, July 4, 1944.
75. *The Times of India*, October 9, 1944.
76. Idem.
77. Idem.

Savarkar asked his followers: "1. Boycott the Congress; 2. don't vote for the Congress ticket; and 3. Vote only for a confirmed merited Hindu nationalist."[78] The Mahasabha reminded the Hindus: "Be the modes of living and worship of the Indian people what they may, there can be no doubt that geographically, historically, ethnologically, politically and even culturally India is one, whole and indivisible, and it must remain so in future. This integrity and indivisibility must be maintained, whatever the cost and sacrifice be."[79]

By 1946 it was quite clear to the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha that the political integrity of India could not be preserved by their resolutions and speeches. Pakistan was no more just a threat from an angry Jinnah; it was a cause to which the Muslim community had committed itself wholeheartedly. They, therefore, advised the Hindus to take up arms in defence of their "religion and culture." Bhopatkar compared the situation of the Hindus in 1946 with the one which the Sikhs in upper India, Rajputs in Central India and the Marathas in the Deccan had to pass through in the 17th century. He said: "The choice before them was, as it is before us, between a policy of appeasement or abject surrender even to the extent of sending jodhbais to Muslim harem, or a policy of resistance even to the extent of the last ditch and last drop of blood. They preferred the latter...The Hindus have several times won and lost it. But even in their downfall, the one precious treasure they kept intact was the ashes of their fathers and the temples of their gods. Is it not then the pious duty of every true-born Hindu of the present day to leave intact and unsullied this precious heirloom to his descendants?"[80] The Hindu Mahasabha called upon the Hindu States "to boldly come forth and support it with men and money as the Muslim States are doing in respect of the Muslim community."[81] The Hindu states were reminded

78. Savarkar, op. cit., p. 333.

79. Idem.

80. Bhopatkar, B.L.: *Presidential Speech, 27th Annual Session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha*, 1946, p. 18.

81. Ibid., p. 22-23.

that they had a two-fold obligation to fulfill, "one in respect of the nation as a whole, and another in respect of the Hindu community to which they belonged. They should take note of the forces released by the two World Wars and their effect on the position which they hold at present and are likely to hold in future...They must realise that sooner or later they would have to merge themselves into the higher and nobler entity of the Indian Nation, and should, therefore, betimes prepare themselves accordingly. They also owe a duty towards the Hindus not only within their areas but also outside of them. Their history is a splendid record of the highly meritorious services which they rendered to the Hindu faith in the past. Is it too much to expect the same kind of services on their part at this juncture when the Hindu religion and culture are in danger ?"[82]

The rout of the Hindu Mahasabha in the elections of 1946 was as complete as the one it had suffered in 1937. But this defeat did not deter it from propagating the ideals for which it stood. It did not cease to spell out for the Hindus the lines on which they could resist the Muslim aggression. In his presidential speech in December 1946 Bhopatkar suggested the following programme to the Hindu Mahasabha :

"Firstly, to agitate and educate both the Hindu masses and classes and to make them communally conscious..."[83]

"Secondly, to organize a Hindu Front composed of the Caste Hindus, Scheduled Castes, Sikhs and others with a view to meet successfully all open or veiled aggression in any part of India. In doing so, all should sink their differences to ward off the common danger. This Front should spread from the biggest city down to the smallest village and should be adequately trained in the tricks of offence and defence."[84]

"Thirdly, to remould Hindu mind by making it more self-reliant and if necessary, even militant...."[85]

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82. Ibid., p. 23.
83. Ibid., p. 21.
84. Idem.
85. Idem.

All the sound and fury of the Hindu Mahasabha in the name of "Hindu Rashtra" went in vain and the partition of India became a fact of history on 15 August 1947. And yet the Hindu leaders prided themselves on the valuable service they had rendered to their community. It was claimed that :[86]

"1. It was only the Hindu Mahasabha which created Hindu consciousness in the country, which had lost its national soul by running after mirage of the psuedo-nationalism propagated by the Indian National Congress and other bodies.

"2. It was only the Hindu Mahasabha which undertook the gigantic task of organising the different sections of the Hindu Nation into one organic whole by undertaking such movements as removal of untouchability and reclamation of the lost millions to its fold...

"3. After the introduction of Montford Reforms, a series of riots by Muslims occurred all over India and the Hindu Mahasabha was the only organization which came forward to defend Hindus in all those riots including those of Kohat, Multan, Saharanpur, Nagpur, Calcutta, Dacca, Bombay, Kanpur, Delhi and many other places.

"4. Under the leadership of the Hindu Mahasabha, big campaigns of Civil Resistance involving imprisonment and other sufferings were conducted on a large scale...

"5. It was only the Hindu Mahasabha which called upon the Hindus not to boycott the Census as directed by the Congress in 1931 and 1941. The Hindus in India and specially in Bengal and the Punjab suffered greatly on account of boycott in 1931 as the figures in this Census were utilised for assigning seats to the Muslims in the Communal Award. Because the Hindus followed the lead given by the Hindu Mahasabha and cooperated in the Census operation of 1941, in spite of its boycott preached by the Congress, many districts, particularly in Bengal, were saved from being included in Pakistan.

"6. From Montford Reforms up to the negotiations

86. *Election Manifesto of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha,* New Delhi, 1951, pp. 2, 3, 4.

carried on by the Cabinet Mission in 1946, it was only the Hindu Mahasabha which effectively championed the cause of nationalism while the Congress had been abjectly surrendering to the aggressive communalism...

"7. It was only the Hindu Mahasabha which had the wisdom and foresight to give a call to the country to militarise its youth during the war period when the Congress was opposed to it."

Soon after the partition when Nehru appealed to the nation to desist from individual acts of retaliation, he announced he would fight the Hindu Fascists who clamoured for a Hindu state. Nehru gave a warning that those Fascists would suffer the fate of Hitlers and Mussolinis.[87] In response to this, Savarkar said : "What were the thousands of Hindu-Sikhs to do when faced by an imminent danger of being massacred in cold-blood, looted, burnt alive, forcibly converted, in short, of being exterminated as a racial and national being by the most barbarous attacks of an organized, dangerously armed and fanatically hostile foe....? Under these circumstances what wonder is there that millions of Hindu-Sikhs prompted by an instinct of self-preservation and animated by the spirit of Pan-Hindu consolidation rose in arms in the East Punjab, in Bharatpur, in Alwar, in Patiala and in Delhi itself and responded to the best of their might and means so furiously and so effectively as to checkmate the Muslim hoardes from attempting an invasion of the East Punjab, thereby throwing them on the defensive and saving Delhi itself from being captured by the Muslims concentrated there."[88]

As regards Nehru's condemnation of the demand for Hindu Raj, Savarkar declared : "It was a stunt on the part of the Congress ministers and leaders to cover up their dismal failure in protecting the life, property and honour of Indian people."[89] "The demand for the Hindu Raj, these psuedo-nationalists say, is communal, stupid, medieval, theoretical, a menace to the mankind itself. But they conveniently refuse

87. Keer, op. cit., p. 361.

88. Idem.

89. Idem.

to tell us what they precisely mean by Hindu Raj, before they characterise it in the above mentioned vilifying terms. Nevertheless, assuming for the sake of argument that the demand for a Hindu State deserves this condemnation on all these counts, may we ask them : was not the demand for a Muslim State at least equally condemnable on these very counts ?"[90] He added "but instead of fighting against that demand for a Muslim Raj you (Nehru) actually abetted the crime of cutting integrated India right into two halves directly on communal lines...and handed over Pakistan to the Muslims so ceremoniously, with such ease and grace as you would hand over a cup of tea to a welcome guest. With what face can you now vilify the demand for a Hindu Raj on this very count even if it could be said to possess all the above traits?"[91] Savarkar went on : "A Pathani or Nizami Muslim Raj is to Gandhiji a cent per cent Swaraj. But a Hindu Raj, o no. It would be communal, fascist, anti-national and an anathema."[92] Commenting on Nehru's refusal to call the independent India, Hindusthan, Savarkar said:... "How is that in spite of the presence of the Hindus, Christians, Parsees and other non-Muslim minorities in its territory all of you, and Gandhiji in particular, keep *salaming* and saluting the newly carved out Muslim Raj as Pakistan which...literally means a Holy Muslim Land, a Muslim State? Is it not a fact that almost all States and nations are called after the names of what the League of Nations termed 'National Majority' predominating each ? Nor have you yourselves ever felt any qualm of conscience in recognising Balochistan, Waziristan... Afghanistan .....in spite of non-Muslim minorities there. How is it then that the very mention of the name of Hindusthan or the Hindu State alone takes your breath out as if you were smitten by a snake-bite?"[93]

Savarkar proclaimed that the "Hindu Sangathan" could not be terrorized by "the threats of such carpet-knights as

90. Idem.

91. Idem.

92. Idem.

93. Ibid., p. 362.

Punditji and his clan."[94] According to him, the choice was not "between India Raj and Hindu Raj but between Muslim Raj and Hindu Raj, between Akhand Hindusthan and Akhand Pakistan."[95] The "Hindu Sangathanist ideology" alone could save the nation and re-establish "an Akhand Hindusthan from the Indus to the Seas."[96]

In spite of all such arguments offered by men like Savarkar, the Hindu community could not be consolidated into a monolithic whole on religio-cultural basis. The Hindu Mahasabha, therefore, had no chances of success. Basically, it remained a regional party of a small section of the Hindus in the Muslim majority areas such as Punjab, Sind and the North-West Frontier Province. Its influence in the Muslim minority provinces, particularly Bihar and U.P., was negligible. The little support it received from the Bengali Hindus was of no help. Whereas prominent Hindu Mahasabha leaders like Bhai Parmananda of Punjab were virulent in their anti-Muslim propaganda, the Hindusabhaits of Bengal did not regard Muslims as an alien element in Indian society. On the contrary, they very often declared that the Muslims of Bengal were their "brothers by the triple tie of blood, of speech and common life."[97] Describing the amicable relationship between the Hindus and Muslims in Bengal, one of the Hindu Mahasabha leaders wrote to Savarkar: "The vast majority of Muslims in the villages in Bengal live on most intimate terms with the Hindus, and it is only the propaganda and the ambition of political power of the educated section of the Muslim community that are responsible for all the communal dissensions in the province."[98] In 1944, N. C. Chatterjee instead of struggling to save the political integrity of India, came out with the suggestion that "an united and organized Bengal" could save not only itself but "rest of India" also.[99] He even claimed that Indian nationalism was

94. Idem.
95. Idem.
96. Baxter, op. cit., p. 363.
97. Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 15.
98. *Savarkar Papers*, Film No. 3.
99. Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 19.

"a product of soil of Bengal" and saw in the partition not a danger to the Hindu culture and Dharma but to the culture of Bengal.[100] The Higher Secondary Education Bill introduced in the Bengal Assembly was opposed by N. C. Chatterjee in these words: "If we want to save Bengal's culture, if we want to prevent the corruption of the Bengali language and literature, then Bengal must be determined to resist this Bill...."[101] The slogan of Hindi-Hindu-Hindusthan was thus only partially acceptable to the Hindus of Bengal.

Although there was enough ground for the 85 per cent Hindus of U.P. to resent the domination of Muslim minority in every department of the Government, yet even here the votaries of the Hindu Mahasabha were few in number. Sir J. P. Srivastava, one-time President of the U.P. Hindu Sabha, felt awkward in writing to Dr. Munje in 1938 that "so far as my province is concerned, I confess with shame that the Hindu movement has not made much headway."[102] The story was not different in C.P. and Maharashtra. In his letter dated 24 July 1936, Padmraj Jain wrote to Savarkar: "It is surprising that the C.P. and Maharashtra do not respond to the Mahasabha's call, while Nagpur could have been our strongest fort. Munje was defeated there totally."[103] Although Maharashtra could boast of 60 branches of Hindu Mahasabha in different parts of the province, the total number of its members in 1938 was only 20,000.[104] Commenting on the limited following of the Hindu Mahasabha, G. H. Joshi pointed out at its annual session at Amritsar in 1943: "....It is a well known fact that over 95% of the Hindu population is totally excluded from the present Hindu Sabha for various reasons.... Can the present Hindu Sabha go on neglecting such vast majority of people remaining outside its scope? Certainly not. This overwhelming majority must be brought under the banner

100. Idem.

101. Idem.

102. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. 13. 1942-47.

103. *Savarkar Papers*, Film No. 3.

104. *Hindu Mahasabha Records*, File No. 13.

of the Hindu Sabha under any circumstances and by any way, without which it cannot expect to be the real representative body of the vast Hindu community. You will be surprised to know that in the villages of Maharashtra, many people, particularly the so-called low-class communities, know not what is Hindu Sabha and what are its objects and what are its differences with the Congress. This is mostly due to the easy-chair propaganda of Hindu Sangathanists on this side and I fear same is the case of other provinces too.... Unless mass is aroused and explained, no political organization can be developed."[105] In his foreword to Inder Prakash's book, Bhai Parmanand pointed out to the same fact. He wrote: "For some reasons... the Hindu Sabha movement could not catch the fancy of the masses. It remained a movement confined to a select class of the Hindu population. The common people remained quite unaffected by it ."[105a]

The propaganda machinery of the Hindu Mahasabha failed miserably to reach the Hindu masses and its denunciation of the Congress bore no fruit. The Hindu Mahasabha had no positive politico-economic programme which could serve as an alternative to the one offered by the Congress. The stand taken by the Hindu nationalists on the question of Muslim separatist demands not being very much different from that of the Mahasabha made it difficult for the latter to acquire the necessary glamour for the Hindus. However, the presence of a large number of distinguished Hindus in the Congress did not leave much room for Hindu communalism to gain strength under the noble garb of Hindu nationalism. Referring to the hold of the Congress on the Hindu mind, P. R. Gopalkrishna wrote to Savarkar in 1940: "The compelling logic of your arguments and the indisputability of the facts on which they are based have had a stirring effect on the mind of intelligentsia in these parts (South India). Many of them have now awakened to the fact that they have been lulled into a false sense of security by the Wardha cult of love and brotherhood.

105. Idem.

105a. Idem, *also* Prakash, op. cit., XVIII.

Unfortunately, however, their attachment or commitment to the Congress is so deep-rooted that they have not the courage of their convictions and still hesitate to transfer their allegiance to Hindu Mahasabha."[106] The despair of the Hindu Mahasabha is evident in the words of Inder Prakash, who wrote: "When the Congress approaches the ignorant masses with high but empty slogans and catchwords and tells them that the Hindu Mahasabha is not to be backed up, the majority of the Hindus take it as a command from heaven and spurn the Hindu Mahasabha without caring to think where their real vital interest lies."[107]

The British Government did not view the Hindu Mahasabha as a representative body of the Hindu community. The only occasion when the Government of India acknowledged the political existence of the Hindu Mahasabha was in 1940. Hailing this as "an astounding event in the history of the Hindu Mahasabha movement", Savarkar complained that "up to this time, the Congress and the League were looked upon by the Government as the only two representative bodies, whose opinion was tantamount to Indian opinion. The Government seems to have framed an equation and learnt it by heart that the Congress and the League were equal in India as a whole."[108] The Government's recognition of the political status of the Mahasabha did add some respectability to the Hindu communal movement, but it was withdrawn as abruptly as it was granted. Members of the Cabinet Mission who visited India in 1946 to decide her political destiny did not bother to confer with the Hindu Mahasabha leaders. Refering to the first Simla Conference Bhopatkar complained: "It is noteworthy that even though minor political parties had been invited to send their representatives to this Conference, the Hindu Mahasabha a major political party representative of the majority community had not been asked to send a representative of its own and for a very obvious reason, namely, such representative would

106. *Savarkar Papers,* Film No. 4, 19/4/1940.

107. Prakash, op. cit., p. 8.

108. Savarkar, op. cit., 406.

have at once pricked the buble of the Conference and would have exhibited it to the World its true colours."[109] In fact, the draft produced by the Cabinet Mission completely ignored the Hindu aspirations and ambitions as expressed in the ideology of the Mahasabha. The Hindu Mahasabha enjoyed neither the support of the Hindu masses nor the patronage of the Government. It, therefore, did not succeed in dislodging the Congress from its premier position in national politics.

The political defeat of the Hindu Mahasabha at the hands of the League and the Congress in 1947 did not result in its withdrawal from Indian politics. Its leaders were confident that the significant role they had played in the past would help them in staging a successful come-back in the near future. Taking into consideration the presence of a sizeable number of Muslims in the post-partition India, the Mahasabha felt morally obliged to continue its political existence lest the "un-national" Congress leadership following the policy of appease-ment should barter away the "legitimate Hindu rights" again. In sheer fustration it issued an appeal to all Hindus in July 1947 to reconstruct New India on the following lines :[110]

"1. All citizens of India will have equal rights, but the Musalmans will be given such rights as Hindu and Sikh minor-ities are accorded in Pakistan.

2. The Musalmans shall be excluded from all key posi-tions in Hindusthan, particularly from the following services;

(i) The Defence
(ii) The Police Forces,
(iii) The Diplomatic services and
(iv) The Communications services.

Explanation : As long as the bulk of the Musalmans of India subscribe to the two-nation theory of the Muslim Leauge, it is impossible to throw key positions open to Muslims in Hindusthan. The overwhelming Musalmans all over India voted for Pakistan and their loyalty to Pakistan, now a foreign

109. Bhopatkar, op. cit., p. 4.

110. *An Appeal to all Hindus.* A hand-bill issued by M. B. Khare and M. C. Sharma on July 20, 1947. *See Munje Papers,* File No. 30/1939-40.

state, is patent. The regrettable pogroms perpetrated during the past year under the head of Direct Action given by the Muslim League have had full support of the generality of Musalmans, including persons holding high offices of responsibility in the Government.No Government can afford to risk the employment of potential saboteurs in key positions. Even the few Muslims who are called nationalists did not do anything effective either to check these ugly happenings, or even to denounce them. They have, therefore, forfeited the right to a treatment different to what is the due of all Musalmans in Hindusthan." In the multi-religious society of independent India the "Hindu Nationalists" were to act as the watch-dogs of the Hindu rights and were to strive for the Hinduisation of India so that this country could become the home of the Hindus as Pakistan had become the home of the Muslims.

But before the Hindu Mahasabha could launch its new programme, the newly formed Congress Government decided to put a ban on its activities. Reacting sharply to this "political persecution", the Hindu Mahasabha refuted the charge that it was a communal party. The President of the Hindu Mahasabha, L. B. Bhopatkar, explained that although his party was open only to the Hindus, it did not advocate communalism. Defining communalism as a "peculiar frame of mind which seeks to aggrandise a community or aids in the aggrandisement of such community at the cost of the other communities and to the detriment of the national interests,"[110a] Bhopatkar requested his opponents to point out a single instance where the Mahasabha had made any demand for what exceeded the due and proper share of the Hindu community. It was improper he said, "as also illogical to put the Mahasabha in the same category as the Muslim League."[111] Criticising the Congress, he said, "Who adopted the queer attitude of 'neither accept nor reject' in respect of the Communal Award, the thin end of the wedge of Pakistan? Who accepted the vicious principle of Parity and thereby the two-nation theory?

110a. Bhopatkar, L.B.: *Press Statements and the Decisions taken at the Working Committee Meeting, December* 1948, New Delhi, 1949, p. 2.

111. Idem.

...Who, under the cover of the slogan of 'Quit India', actually split India? And last but not the least, who has conceded reservation of seats to minorities even under the new Constitution and thereby perpetuated communalism? Surely, not the Hindu Mahasabha, but the Indian National Congress, the consistent upholder of communalism...."[112] He further added: "If Pakistan can be a Muslim State, Palestine a Jew State, or UK or USA a Christian State....why the dominion of India cannot be a Hindu State or Hindu Raj? And if the UK and USA is a secular democratic State, why cannot a Hindu State be such a State?"[113]

While the Hindu Mahasabha leaders were engaged in fighting against the Government to get the ban lifted, the tragic death of Mahatma Gandhi at the hands of a Hindu communalist turned the tide of public opinion against them. They had to make a tactical withdrawal at that stage to save themselves from the public wrath. The Hindu communalists had to reorganise themselves under a new banner to avoid the stigma attached to the name of Hindu Mahasabha. This they did in 1951 when the Akhil Bhartiya Jan Sangh was formed under the leadership of Shayama Prasad Mukherjee. The tradition of communal politics was thus kept alive in new India.

112. Ibid., p. 3.

113. Idem.

CHAPTER NINE

POST-PARTITION HINDU COMMUNALISM

NATIONALIST leaders like Nehru were confident that the establishment of secular democracy would automatically destroy the germs of communalism in an independent India. He soon discovered that his hopes were ill founded. The assassination of Gandhi at the hands of a Hindu fanatic did not prevent the old group of Hindu communalists from renewing their political activities. The flow of refugees from East Bengal and West Punjab provided them with an immediate rationale to come forward as the champion of the Hindu interests.

The revival of the Muslim League in Kerala saw the formation of a Hindu political party on the same pattern as that of the Hindu Mahasabha. A large number of old Hindusabhaits reorganized themselves under the leadership of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and founded the Akhil Bhartiya Jan Sangh in 1951 with the avowed purpose of nullifying the partition of India.[1] Addressing a public meeting in October 1951 Shyama Prasad Mukherjee said: "We have definite views on Pakistan. We hold the opinion that partition of Bharat was a tragic folly. It has served no purpose and helped to solve no problem.... *We fearlessly believe in the goal of reunited India.*"[2] Shyama Prasad Mukherjee took special care to save his party from being put in the same category as the Hindu Mahasabha lest it should be condemned as reactionary and communal. The Jan Sangh, therefore, did not restrict its membership to the Hindus alone; it was thrown open to people of all religions, including the Muslims.[3] The Jan Sangh has always claimed to be a non-communal party for this reason. In his article "What Jan Sangh Offers" published in *The Organiser* in 1951 Balraj Madhok claimed, "Jan Sangh is

1. *The Organiser,* June 23, 1952.
2. Ibid. October 29, 1951.
3. See the text of *The Jan Sangh Constitution in The Organiser,* June 23, 1951.

essentially a nationalist party. Its nationalism is not based on any temporary consideration of policy to suit any particular end. It is rooted in unflinching faith in an undivided loyalty for Bharat, its great culture, heritage and great men, and has a robust faith in its future.... It represents the common way of Bhartiya life which must be accepted in practice by all who claim to be treated as Bhartiya nationals..."[4] Replying to the Congress condemnation of the Jan Sangh as a communal body, Shyama Prasad Mukerjee said: "If, being communal means having the courage not to sacrifice our national interests at the alter of the notorious Muslim pandering and Pakistan appeasement policy, we are communal, hundered per cent communal and proud to be so."[5]

The ideology of the Jan Sangh, in fact, is not basically different from the pre-partition ideology of the Hindu Mahasabha or the Rashtriya Svayam Sevak Sangh. Toeing the line of Savarkar, Din Dayal Upadhyay asserted, "If we want unity, we have to know Hindu nationalism and Hindu culture, for Hindu nationalism is Bhartiya nationalism and Hindu culture is Bhartiya culture." The top leadership of the Jan Sangh is in the hands of the former Hindusabhaits and RSS leaders. The RSS workers exercise a controlling influence over the organization wing of the Sangh and carry out its propaganda work at the mass level.[6]

The threat to secular democracy presented by the Hindu Mahasabha was not so serious as the one now presented by the Jan Sangh. The Hindu Mahasabha was an irritating impediment to common nationalism; Jan Sangh is a challenge and a force to reckon with. The leaders of the Jan Sangh do not rely solely on their policy of antagonism against the Muslims for their political success. The political programme envisaged by them touches some of the wider issues of national life also. This helps to camouflage the reactionary ideology of their party. As a result of the political success achieved by the Jan Sangh in recents years it has acquired some patronage which it can

4. Ibid., August 15, 1951.

5. Ibid., October 29, 1951.

6. Curran, op. cit., pp. 30, 31.

distribute to gain additional strength. An analysis of the past general elections given below shows that from the time of its inception in 1951 to 1967 the power of the Jan Sangh has risen steadily. Its members till recently shared power with other political parties in provinces like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab.

STATE ASSEMBLIES[7]

Percentage of the valid votes polled				Percentage of the seats won			
1952	1957	1962	1967	1952	1957	1962	1967
2.8	3.6	5.5	8.75	1.1	1.5	3.7	7 4

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1952	1957	1962	1967	1952	1957	1962	1967
3.1	3.8	6.4	8.95	0.6	0.8	2.8	8.75

It would be wrong, however, to conclude from this upward trend in the Jan Sangh's popularity that the Hindus have become more communal minded than before. In the eyes of the masses, the Jan Sangh is not different from any other political party. Even the intense propaganda and the zeal of the RSS workers had not succeeded in swinging all the Hindu votes in rural areas in favour of the Jan Sangh. The Jan Sangh's claim that it is fighting for the progress of the Indian nation and for the preservation of Hindu culture are popular slogans carefully designed to mislead the Hindu masses. The bulk of its supporters and sympathisers come from the more privileged sections of the Hindu community. In the 1952 general elections, those who contested on the Jan Sangh tickets and those who provided the necessary funds to carry out the Party propaganda for the Jan Sangh were landlords, prosperous businessmen, and the displaced ruling classes of U.P., M.P., and Rajasthan. Although the Jan Sangh was ready to abolish *jagirdaris* and *zamindaris* in case they proved detrimental to the development of Indian economy, it also conceded that "enough land would be left with such *zamindars* and *jagirdars*

7. Sastri, K.N. Ramnnah: *An Analytical Study of 1967 Elections in India*, Agra, 1967, pp. 64-65, 105; Baxter, op. cit., p. 70.

as would settle down as land-owning farmers."[8] The industrial policy of the Jan Sangh was couched in similar words. The Party stood for "public ownership of industries, particularly those especially catering to the essential defence needs of the country."[9] With regard to the other large industries, it held that since the state ownership has not proved efficient, the Party "will encourage private enterprise instead of talking vaguely about nationalisation."[10]

The economic programme launched by the Jan Sangh in 1957 promised "a fair deal to the common man through abolition of the Sales Tax and reduction in other indirect taxes."[11] It also talked of "creating a feeling of equality and oneness in the Hindu society by liquidating untouchability and casteism."[12] The Party's manifesto of 1962 spelled out a detailed economic programme carefully designed to conform to the popular taste. It promised to give something to every one, from a teacher to a toddy-tapper. But the Jan Sangh's stand in the controversial economic issues was more clearly stated in 1967. Explaining his Party's economic policy, Balraj Madhok stated that it would follow "a policy of economic liberalism in which normal laws of economics tempered with a general acceptance of 'Sarvodaya' (Welfare of all), take precedence over dogma."[13] These "normal laws of economics" which Mr. Madhok did not bother to define, are in fact only those which allowed a free play of economic forces of the type witnessed by the people of England during their great Industrial Revolution. For the sake of efficiency, the Jan Sangh wants Indian industrialists to function independently and not be restricted by the controlling authority of the state because "the efficiency and quantum of

8. Baxter, op. cit., pp. 85-86. Jhangiani, Motilal: *Jan Sangh and Swatantra—A Profile of the Rightist Parties in India*, Bombay, 1967, pp. 75, 79.
9. Baxter, op. cit., p. 70.
10. Idem.
11. Ibid., p. 85.
12. Ibid., 158.
13. Madhok, Balraj: *Why Jan Sangh*, in Bhatkal's *Political Alternatives*, Agra, 1967, pp. 207-8.

production are reduced in direct proportion to external controls and reliance on quotas and permits and licenses in the place of competition. This amounts to putting premium on inefficiency and corruption at the cost of efficiency and honesty."[14] Further, "a general delicensing of all industries which do not require any foreign exchange and foreign import for getting into production and allowing the normal laws of economics to regulate their quantitative and qualitative growth can go a long way in giving a spurt to industrial production in the country."[15] If Jan Sangh rejects nationalisation of industries on the ground of efficiency, it opposes nationalisation of banks on the ground of the normal laws of economic competition. It believes that "nationalisation of all banking will only retard the process of expansion. It would be neither in the interest of the employers nor in the best interest of the economy as such...."[16] The Jan Sangh showed great sympathy to Indian cultivators and envisaged many agricultural reforms to maximise production and ensure a good return to small landholders, but its concern for the welfare of the rural masses is only a part of its political strategy. So far, it has remained a party of urbanised Hindus. It is now anxious to bring the Indian villages within the orbit of its political influence. It cannot hope to win its future battles against its leftist rivals without penetrating the rural areas. With the help of the financial resources of the industrialists and the votes of the common masses, the Jan Sangh plans to capture power at the centre to forestall those radical changes which might reduce the affluence of the upper-class Hindus.

The economic programmes of the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party are almost identical. This has persuaded many political scientists to put Jan Sangh in the category of the Indian rightist parties. No political party which draws its sustenance from religion can ever be radical. Yet there is a fundamental difference between a rightist party wedded

14. Ibid., p. 208.

15. Idem.

16. Ibid., p. 213; also Bright, J. Saran: *Guru Golwalkar and RSS*. New Delhi, Date? p. 6.

to secularism and a rightist party which allies itself with religion. In the case of the former, it is possible for its rivals to convert their opposition into a class war. This cannot be done in the case of the latter. Indian history is a witness to the fact that on some of the most crucial occasions political behaviour of the Indian people has been independent of their class affiliations. Communalism divides one economic class into two warring groups. Communalist parties can blunt the edge of opposition attacks by simply branding them leftist. If they are made by their co-religionists then they are ridiculed as anti-national. Keeping this in mind, it would be a grave error to equate the all-round conservatism of the communalists with political conservatism of the rightists.

The drastic modification which the Jan Sangh has effected in recent years in its outward posture is a deliberate move to meet the challenge posed by the newly awakened social forces. The Jan Sangh leaders are vehemently opposed to casteism and show great enthusiasm for removal of untouchability. The reasons for these noble sentiments can be understood best in the light of Mr. Malkani's explanation for the poor performance of the Party in 1952 general elections. According to him, one of the main reasons for the Jan Sangh's defeat was the fact that it did not have any influence over the Harijans.[17]

It has now become imperative for every political party to have a broad base amongst the masses. Unlike the Hindu Mahasabha of the pre-independence days, the Jan Sangh cannot pitch its struggle on the solitary pillar of Hindu-Muslim antagonism. If this single theme of propaganda had failed to arouse all sections of the Hindu community to demand Hindu Raj in the emotionally charged atmosphere of the forties, there is little chance for it to do so today. The ideal of Hindu supremacy, therefore, has got to be integrated with issues vitally important for the welfare of the Hindu masses. The upper-caste leaders of the Jan Sangh cannot close their eyes to the rising dissatisfaction in the lower strata of their community. The poverty-ridden Hindu masses are least interested

17. Baxter, Craig: *The Jan Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party*, Philadelphia, 1969, p. 102.

in the revival of great spiritual values of their culture. Their interests are centred around such petty material things as a house or a tractor, which they want to possess immediately. Unless the Jan Sangh holds out promises in that direction to the discontented segments of the Hindu community, it cannot hold the Hindus back from swelling the ranks of those parties which come forward to do so. The growing popular belief in the magic wand of socialism has created a serious political dilemma for the Jan Sangh. When every political party professes its allegiance to the socialistic pattern of society, the Jan Sangh cannot afford to call itself the champion of the monopolists, ex-princes and big farmers without committing political suicide. It has got to oppose Marxism and socialism without rejecting the ideal of economic equality. The latest Jan Sangh election manifesto is a desperate attempt in this direction. The anti-national element inherent in the ideology of Marxist parties is well exploited by the Jan Sangh leaders to win the support of the educated sections of the Hindu community. The Jan Sangh leaders are seriously engaged in making their party an avenue through which this anti-nationalist element can be counteracted. The Sangh claims. "Communism can be combated and conquered in Hindustan by the Hindus only through Hindutva."[18] According to Madhok, "Communists are not only a danger to national unity and democratic liberties of the people, they pose the greatest threat to the economic health of the country as well. In their blind adoration of Soviet Union and China they have mortgaged their bodies and souls to them. Therefore, their re-education and redemption through Indiansiation has become an imperative necessity."[19]

The stand of the RSS on socialism is not different from that of the Jan Sangh. It "does not believe in creating factions or fomenting hostility by laying undue stress upon economic factions and disparities as the Communists are doing.... The RSS intends to fight out communism through educating the people along the ancient Hindu heritage which itself was

18. Baxter, op. cit., p. 60.

19. Bhatkal, op. cit., p. 217; Bright, op. cit., p. 60.

communistic in outlook but did not encourage any devilish conflict between the rich and the poor."[20] Golwalkar chided the Congress, the new Socialists and the communists for trying to force various laws on the Hindus which threaten their existence "as a homogeneous people with distinctive *Dharma* and culture, for their disinclination to do honour to the Hindu sentiments in relation to the cow, for their partial treatment of the Muslims and also for their pro-Muslim communal outlook evidenced in their agreement to reservation of seats...The Hindu people, their *Dharma,* Sanskrit and all they cherish stand in danger of being wholly obliterated if the reins of power are entrusted in the hands of such un-Hindu, often anti-Hindu, elements."[21]

However the unique political position which the Jan Sangh enjoys today does not rest on its economic programme: it rests on its plan of social reconstruction. It aims at building the future society of India on the model of the dead past. Madhok would not consider education of Indian children complete until and unless they have studied the books like *Hitopadesha.*[22] He is also convinced that the "Ayurvedic system of medicine is more suited to the Indian conditions." In the name of Indian culture, the Jan Sangh leaders do not hesitate to denounce the whole process of modernisation which is crucial for the building up of the Indian nation at this time. On December 27, 1969 the Jan Sangh Working Committee came out with its clarion call of "Indianisation"[23] of all those who stay away "from the mainstream of Indian (Hindu?) culture and thought" and also those "who prefer European ways of life" to Indian.[24] The Indianisation scheme has always been an important part of the Jan Sangh's political programme. By a resolution passed on January 7, 1957, the Jan Sangh decided that "for the development of nationalism

20. See Venkatrao, M.A., *Communism and Indian Culture, in the Organiser,* December 24, 1959; Bhatkal, op. cit., p. 217.
21. *The Organiser,* February 18, 1957.
22. Bhatkal, op. cit., p. 217.
23. Idem.
24. *The Hindustan Times,* December 31, 1969; Madhok, Balraj: *Indianisation,* New Delhi, 1970, pp. 126–129.

one culture shall be imbibed by all the nationals of the country"[25] and that the society and Government should take the following steps for the implementation of this task :

1. "Education should be based on national culture. The people of the land should be provided the rich and life-giving spiritual food which abounds in the form of gems of Indian literature like Ramayana, Gita, Upanishads, Mahabharata and other nation-building literature of modern Indian lang uages. Before long, a time should come when a basic knowledge of this current of Indian culture is considered essential in various spheres of social life."[26]

2. "The birth-days of national heroes and similar other occasions be celebrated as national days which should be inspired, aided and administered by the State and all nationals should take part in them."[27]

3. "The major festivals of Bharat should be solemnised and celebrated as national festivals."[28]

4. "The study of Sanskrit be revived as an essential ingredient of scholarship. Efforts be made to recognise Devnagari script for all Indian languages."[29]

5. "The Indian History be re-written so that it may be the History of Indian people and their oppressors and invaders. The historical epochs be divided on the basis of progressive growth of the Indian society, its movements and revolutions, and not according to the foreign rulers of India. The story of India's cultural conquest of various continents be incorporated in it."[30]

6. "(a) From the point of view of cultural revival and unification, the Jan Sangh exhorts the Hindu Samaj to remove the inherent differences and weaknesses, especially the inequality arising out of caste differences, so that complete equality is established between backward classes and other castes. (b) In this way, along side of this internal cleaning it is *the duty of*

25. *The Organiser,* January 7, 1957.
26. Idem.
27. Idem.
28. Idem.
29. Idem.
30. Idem.

the Hindu society to Indianise those sections of India's national being which were shaken out of their moorings and made to look outside the country for inspiration. Hindu society should assimilate them completely. Only in this way communalism can be rooted out and the unity and solidarity of the nation re-established."[31] According to Madhok, "Nationalism is not a question of political loyalties only. It demands a feeling of attachment and a sense of pride for the country's heritage and culture as well. It has ramifications in the field of thought and action regarding all aspects of a nation's life.... Indianisation, therefore, is nothing but the inculcation of a strong sense of nationalism in all Indians....It is something to which no patriotic Indian worth his name can take exception...."[32]

The Jan Sangh leaders who profess faith in the democratic values are not aware of their own contradictions. They want to impose their narrow sectarian views on all those who do not conform to the Jan Sangh stereotype. The whole process of modernisation is rejected by them so that the Indian society could remain truly Indian. In the eyes of Golwalkar, modernisation is synonymous with de-Indianisation. He, therefore, regards it "better that Bharat should go under sea rather then become a carbon copy of others...Is it patriotism to go on simply copying others? No, it is rather an insult to the mother. We are determined to keep Bharat, Bharat."[33] It is this kind of thinking which prompts the Jan Sangh to champion the cause of Hindi and Sanskrit, the national and cultural languages of the Hindus. Behind the facade of Indianisation and the slogans of Hindu, Hindi and Hindustan, the newly formed Brahmin-Bania fraternity, in cooperation with the ex-rulers and *zamindars,* is struggling hard to preserve the old politico-economic and social structure of the Hindu community against

31. *The Organiser,* January 7, 1957, also see Golwalkar's speeches in *The Organiser,* April 5, 1957, April 8, 1957, August 31, 1959, December 12, 1955 and April 31, 1959.
32. Madhok, op. cit., p. 30.
33. *The Organiser,* August 31, 1959; also Anthony Ekkenzimittan: *The Philosophy of the RSS for the Hindu Swaraj.* Bombay 1951, p. 27; Bright, op. cit., p. 127; Curran, op. cit., p. 30.

modern forces. It is against this background that we have to view their plans to synthesise the technology of the West with the ideals of the ancient Hindu culture, democarcy with the caste system, and communalism with nationalism.

Generally speaking, the leadership in the Jan Sangh is provided by the educated, affluent and upper-caste Hindus. The Jan Sangh candidates for 1967 elections in Maharashtra were 16 lawyers, 10 medical practitioners, 27 traders and businessmen, 33 agriculturists, 9 social workers, 6 teachers, 4 journalists, and 5 'others'.[34] In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan the ex-rulers and big *zamindars* constitute the chief source of Jan Sangh's strength. The land-slide victory of the Jan Sangh in the general elections of 1967 was not merely a result of its cow-protection agitation and the Pakistani invasion. This time the Jan Sangh was substantially helped by the "large business organizations of India..."[35] A booklet issued by the Jan Sangh for national circulation contained advertisements "from such large firms as Khatau Mills, Dharmsi Morarji Chemical Company, the Cement Allocation and Coordination, the Associated Cement, Tata and Scindia Steam Navigation."[36] Another booklet distributed in Delhi in support of the campaign for Madhok also included advertisements from firms like the Hindusthan Motors of the Birla group and the Modi Industrial complex of Uttar Pradesh.[37] Besides, most of the candidates put up by the Party were persons who could not only finance their own campaign but could render financial help to others as well.

It must be added here that the recent revival and intensification of Hindu communalism is also indirectly linked with the politicization of the Harijans. Whereas the new political, economic and social forces have made deep dents in the caste solidarity of the *dvijas*, they have at the same time indirectly strengthened the solidarity among the lower castes. Political orientation of the caste solidarity and its significance in general

34. Baxter, op. cit., pp. 215-16.
35. Ibid., p. 266.
36. Idem.
37. Idem.

elections is not unknown to Indian politicians. All political parties whether radical or reactionary try hard to woo the votes of the lower castes and take great pride in calling themselves the champion of their cause. Ahirs, Chamars, Kurmis, Dhobis etc. occupy seats in the Central or the State Legislatures today mainly on the strength of the votes of their caste groups. Through various administrative measures the Shudras have now penetrated the hitherto prohibited domain of politics and bureaucracy. This participation of the Shudras in the national life presents an obvious threat to the power monopoly of the upper-caste Hindus. By stressing the cultural and religious unity of the Hindu community the upper-caste candidates sometimes make themselves acceptable to the Shudras against their Muslim rivals. The impact of this propaganda of the Shudras is evident from the fact that all leaders of the minority communities have failed to pursuade the Shudras to join hands with them to create a common front against the majority.

During the agitation launched against the partition of Bengal as well as during the Non-cooperation Movement in 1921, the Congress leaders had failed to get the support of the Untouchables.[38] When the Secretary of the Delhi Congress in 1921 tried to persuade the Chaudharis of the Chamars of Delhi and Agra to become the four-anna members of the Congress, they immediately replied that unless their grievances as regards the taking of water from the public wells were removed they could not induce their brethern to join the Congress. The Secretary tried to impress on them the significance of the Swaraj and asked them to wait patiently for the removal of their disabilities. One of the young men present in the gathering got up and said, "our trouble from which we are suffering for centuries must wait solution, but the *Laddu* of Swaraja must go into your mouth at once."[39] Leaving the Secretary speechless, the Chamars went back without becoming the four-anna members of the Congress. The inter-relation between the casteism of the Shudra and Hindu communalism can be

38. *The Tribune*, April 25, 1909.

39. Swami Shraddhanand: *Inside Congress*, Bombay, 1946. pp. 133-34.

clearly seen in the Communal Award and the Poona pact of 1932. It was the prospect of a breach between the "caste Hindus" and the "Scheduled caste Hindus" which had drawn the attention of the political leaders to the "sad lot of the Harijans." Gandhi's opposition to a separate electorate for the Depressed Classes was caused by the fear that "it will creat division in Hinduism." He had declared, "I do not mind the Untouchables being converted to Islam or Christianity, I should tolerate that but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are two divisions set up in every village."[40] When Dr. Khare, the Premier of C.P., appointed an Untouchable as his minister in his cabinet, Gandhi expressed his disapproval on the ground that it would raise "absurd ambition" in the Harijan minds.[41] For Gandhi "the Shudra who only serves as a matter of religious duty, and who will never own any property, who indeed has not even the ambition to own any thing, is deserving a thousand obeisances."[42] In pursuance of Hindu Sangathan programme Ganpat Rai requested Tatya Rao to "..consolidate Maharashtra in the sense that Dr. Ambedkar's group and other depressed classes should be united with the help of Jagat Guru, Hindu labourers with Capitalists so that the danger of class war may vanish away from India in general and amongst the Hindus in particular...."[43] Both the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League had made vigorous attempts to win over the Hindu oppressed classes to their side so that the numerical strength of their respective communities could be enlarged. The former tried to achieve it by reminding the Harijans of their stark exploitation by the caste Hindus; the latter by emphasizing the oneness of the Hindu religion and culture. An urgent need was thus felt by the Hindu leaders of diverse ideologies to "strengthen socio-religious ties with the Harijans." The Hindu Reforms Conference held at Delhi in 1932 passed the resolution that "the so-called 'Untouchable' and the Depressed Class Hindus have equal rights in respect of

40. Keer : *Dr. Ambedkar and His Mission*, Bombay, 1969, p. 189.
41. *Vividh Vrata*, August 14, 1938.
42. Sanjana, Bombay, 1946, p. 12, 13.
43. *Savarkar Papers*, Film No. 3.

the use of public wells and other public places and roads as other Hindus... The Conference upholds the right of the 'Untouchables' to have free admission into all Hindu temples and places of public worship for *dev darshan.*"[44] In a public meeting held in Bombay on September 24, 1921, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya said, "....It shall be the duty of all Hindu leaders to secure, by every legitimate and peaceful means, an early removal of all social disabilities now imposed by custom upon the so-called untouchable classes, including the bar in respect of admission to temples."[45] Thus, from 1932 onwards acculturation of the Shudras had become a national necessity—a converging ground where nationalism and communalism were in perfect unison. In this manner, the unity of India got linked up with the unity of the Hindus—or shall we say with the ideology of the Hindu "Rashtra"?

The hold excercised by the Jan Sangh is much wider than the one exercised by the Hindu Mahasabha in the past. But so far it has still remained confined mainly to the Hindi speaking areas, namely, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi. The upper caste–upper class conjunction that one notices in the Jan Sangh or the 8.75 per cent votes secured by it in the 1967 general elections do not themselves pose any real threat to India's secular democracy. But when this small success is viewed in the light of Jan Sangh's concept of Indian nation and its attitude towards non-Hindus, the danger it poses to Indian democracy becomes clearer. We should not forget that the Jan Sangh is integrally connected with the RSS—the organization of the Hindu fanatics, comparable to the Muslim Khaksars of Allama Mashriqi. Hindu progressives believe in integrating Indian society through secularism. But to the Jan Sangh secularism "is only an euphemism for the policy of Muslim appeasement.[46] It believes in solving the minority problem through the ancient method of assimilation and Hinduisation.

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44. *Annual Register 1932,* Vol. II. p. 321.

45. *The Tribune,* August 26, 1932.

46. *The Organiser,* March 21, 1960, October 22, 1951.

However, the Jan Sangh does not operate in a political vacuum. Its success is very much tied up with our present-day political climate and is not entirely the result of Hindu chauvinism. The politico-religious fanaticism of Muslim organizations like the Jamaat-e-Islami, coupled with the vicious propaganda of Pakistan continues to evoke outbursts of retaliation from the Hindu communalists. They not only provide sustenance to Hindu communal forces but also hurt the feelings of those Hindus who are sincerely struggling to create an integrated secular society. Pakistan's professed concern for the welfare of Indian Muslims lends prestige and strength to Hindu communalism. The self-righteous and patronising attitude of the Indian Government towards its Muslim citizens adds to this delicate situation. The upholders of "secular democracy" go on proclaiming and reminding themselves that some of the highest offices of the Government are held by Muslims. This kind of attitude can only turn the rights of the Indian citizens belonging to a minority group into favours from the majority community. While every opportunity is used to condemn the communal activities of the Jan Sangh, the so-called radical politicians maintain guarded silence when the need arises to denounce the communal activities of the Muslims. This double-faced attitude towards communalism is a political asset which no political party in India is willing to relinquish. A different approach can hardly be expected when votes are sought *en bloc* in a calculated manner from different religious and caste groups. The responsibility for creating such an atmosphere rests not only on Jamat-i-Islami and the Jan Sangh, but also on non-communal political parties which otherwise swear in the name of secularism and democracy.

47. Ibid., August 24, 1953.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

Can we hope that the rise of regionalism, greater spread of education and a rapid industrial progress in the country will result in the recession of communalism in Indian politics? Can we expect that political parties with communal ideologies like the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Muslim League, the RSS and the Jan Sangh will one day become obsolete? These are the things yet to be seen, but there is no rational ground to feel optimistic about any dramatic change in the situation. Since communalism is used as a political weapon by a group to acquire and preserve its political base, economic prosperity and spread of education in themselves cannot provide a fully effective antidote to this problem. Nor can the end of the existing communal organizations bring about a final exit of communalism from Indian politics. Muslim communalism, for example, has survived the partition of India and the migration of all prominent leaders of the Muslim League to Pakistan. Similarly, what ground is there to hope that Hindu communalism will not persist in spite of the secular ideology of the Indian Republic?

Communal politics is essentially linked with the question of distribution of power. Communalism, as a political doctrine, has become an operative force in India as a part of the unceasing struggle for power open to all in a democratic set-up. It should be viewed, therefore, as a political problem rather than as a problem of religious sensitivity. The naivete of the Indian politicians who feel confident that they can solve the communal problem through inter-religio-communal conferences, committees, *melas*, and symposiums is a little astounding. They have yet to realise that solutions of political problems do not lie in social gatherings and pious platitudes.

In a democracy based on universal suffrage, minorities are bound to remain a political problem. Both in Eastern Europe and Western Europe all the wisdom and ingenuity of the European statesmen and political thinkers had failed to pro-

duce a successful formula to solve the minority problem in a democracy. The two solutions tried by them, namely, exchange of population and definite safeguards for the minorities, ended only in making the problem more complicated. Partial success has been achieved by the Soviet Union in this regard, but that has been possible only through the use of force. Since nationalism and localism (minority nationalism) were both "bourgeois deviations" for them, their forcible suppression was justified to uphold the dictatorship of the proleteriat.[1] Some of us believe we can solve our minority problem by adopting the Soviet model not bearing in mind that the Soviet Government does not accord official recognition to either nationalism or religion. Obviously, the Russian model offers no help in resolving the problem of the religious minorities within the existing political structure of the Indian Republic.

In the British-governed India the leaders of the Muslim League were obsessed with the fear that the establishment of self-government on a democratic pattern would render them powerless on account of the Hindu majority in the country. To ward off this danger they demanded and fought bitterly for various safeguards like separate electorate and weightage for the Muslims and finally for the partition of India. If the special concessions enjoyed by the Muslim minority under an imperial and alien government in the '30s did not meet their expectations, guarantees spelled out in the constitution of an independent India have even lesser chance to make it feel secure and contented. Mr. Jinnah had not asked for anything more than "an honourable settlement." But unfortunately, a settlement which may prove "honourable" to the minority is not always acceptable to the majority. In a democracy the grant of special rights and privileges to a minority on grounds of its religious identity is bound to arouse religious suscepti-

1. Possession of "definite territory tilled by the members of the nation was one of the essential characteristics of nationhood. Since Jews are not concentrated in one region they do not enjoy the status of a nation." Schelsinger (ed.): *The Nationalities Problem and Soviet Administration* (Selected Documents), London, 1956, Document No. 17—excerpts from: *The Struggle Against Nationalism and the Lessons of the Ukraine*, pp. 14, 181.

bilities of the majority also. All such measures disturb the confidence which the majority group possesses on account of its greater numbers. Once the confidence is shaken, it starts campaigning against the minority with religious and cultural slogans similar to those adopted by the minority for self-preservation. In the extreme, it tries to eliminate the minority from all positions of political power.

This does not mean that we must accept the communal problem as an inevitable part of our national life. Nor that our endeavours to resolve this problem serve no purpose. But it is necessary to remind ourselves that there is no short cut to its ultimate solution. Political wisdom lies in treating communalism as a political problem needing a political solution. Mere utterances of pious platitudes for religious toleration and brotherliness are not the answer. Perhaps what is required is the secularisation of Indian culture and politics in the real sense.

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